Friday, December 23, 2011 ★★ 12 sections / Vol. 27 / No. 15 P18 | www.inquirer.net | Mobile Alerts: Text INQ DREAMING to 4467 | INQUIRER 990AM

PHILIPPINE DAILY
INQUIRER

SLEEPING LIKE A LOG A boy dozes off amid a sea of logs that were washed up by rampaging floodwaters spawned by Tropical Storm "Sendong" in Iligan City on Dec. 16. Thousands of homes were destroyed and entire villages along the coast were flattened. A9

'It's like a tsunami hit'

UN exec also warns of disease outbreaks

ILIGAN CITY—A UN official yesterday likened to a tsunami the weekend flooding that devastated the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan.

A UN humanitarian coordinator, Soe Nyunt-U, also voiced concern about the possibility of disease outbreaks among the thousands living in evacuation centers after their houses were washed away last Friday when Tropical Storm "Sendong" unleashed flash floods.

"It was as if the cities were hit by an inland tsunami," Soe told reporters in Manila. "Entire areas were completely flattened. Only a few sturdy buildings remain standing, and those had sustained a lot of damage."

"Debris from houses, buildings and other structures that had been destroyed by the storm was all swept out to the sea, leaving huge areas devoid of all traces of habitation," he said.

About 43,000 displaced are inside evacuation centers, most of them in worst-hit Iligan and Cagayan de Oro, home to nearly a million people. Another 266,000 are being assisted outside temporary shelters. Nearly 80,000 houses were destroyed and damaged.

Local authorities and grie- (TYLER) A10

CHILDREN pray at an evacuation center in Cagayan de Oro City during a healing session aimed at helping them come to grips with the devastation caused by Tropical Storm "Sendong." A9

TALES FROM THE DEPTHS

'Bayug is no longer an island'

By DJ Yap

ILIGAN CITY—Flanked by the sea to the west and the river to the east, the settlers of Bayug Island knew that it was only a matter of time before the waters around them reclaimed the land.

Talk of "tsunami" went the rounds after the great sea from the Indian Ocean in 2004, and anxious residents kept watch over the waves of Iligan Bay. Some tied boats to coconut trees as a precautionary means of escape from the fury of the sea.

They never expected that the deluge would come from behind—the Mandulog River—and that the waves whipped up by Tropical Storm "Sendong" would leap from inland toward the sea rather than the other way around.

"It was a backward tsunami," resident Erlito Echavez told the Inquirer on Wednesday morning, shaking his head.

"We were worried about the sea in front of us. We never (DAVID) A11

Reward eyed for info on 'Butcher'

By Marlon Ramos
in Manila
and Tonette Orejas
Inquirer Central Luzon

THE GOVERNMENT is considering offering a reward for information that may lead to the arrest of retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr., Justice Secretary Leila de Lima said yesterday.

De Lima said she and Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo were closely monitoring the manhunt for Palparan, a retired general tagged by activists as "Berdugo" (Butcher) for his purported role in extraju- (RAMOS) A11

PALPARAN Called a coward by human rights groups

CBCP: Let's revive 'pamunuluyan' songs

By Philip C. Tubeza

ANNOYED with kids pestering your household with western Christmas carols sung out of tune and with mangled lyrics?

Msgr. Pedro Dalloria, director of the (CBCP) A17

UN urges gov'ts to give ₱1.2B more to aid effort

By Jerry E. Esplanada

"THE OVERFLOWING generosity of the Filipino people in saving lives," a key United Nations official in Manila said—but more needs to be done for the victims and survivors of Tropical Storm "Sendong."

As foreign and local aid continued to stream in a week after the deluge, the United Nations yesterday launched the Philippines (Mindanao) Humanitarian Action Plan 2012, an appeal to the international community to provide an additional $25.4 million (about P1.2B billion) to the relief effort.

The target is to "provide food, clean water for drinking and bathing, emergency shelter, and essential household items to 471,000 worst-affected people in the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan for three months," according to Dr. Soe Nyunt-U, acting head of the local UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (Ocha).

"The needs are overwhelming," Soe said in a news conference at the Ocha (UN BRIDGE) A4

Malacañang plans reforestation in Bukidnon, Lanao

By Kristine L. Alave

MALACAÑANG announced yesterday plans to resurrect a multibillion-peso project to restore the rainforests of Bukidnon province and areas around Lanao Lake, the water source of Mindanao's six rivers.

The greening of the watershed sites in Mindanao is a key long-term solution to prevent the low-lying areas from landslides and flash floods simi- (MALACAÑANG) A10

P-NOY PLAYS SANTA President Aquino, backed by Social Welfare Secretary Dinky Soliman (left), sister Kris (right), hosts a Christmas party and distributes gifts on 1.5M street children at Cuneta Astrodome in Pasay City. Nephews Jiabus and Bimbi help their uncle spread cheer among the poor. (MALACAÑANG)

METRO

8 dead, 12 hurt in Antipolo road mishap

SPORTS

• Mayweather sentenced to 90 days in jail; Pacquiao bout still in doubt

WORLD

• Syrian troops attack town, kill 160 people

WEATHER FORECAST

Second FRONTPAGE

6/42		
1-Dec	10	14
4-Dec	22	31
7-Dec	19	15

SUERTE 6/55

1-Dec	9	8
4-Dec	2	9
7-Dec	1	3

SIX DIGIT Sweepstakes

0	9	8	5	4	6

6/49 LUZ-MIN-MIN

8	13	27	31	35	37

P3,041,766.00

SUPER LOTTO 6/49

3	5	6	20	25	44

P13,537,156.40

LOTTO 70/42 Twin 6D4 LOTTO, result to 6842. PCSO direct

Keep off impeachment, SC told

By Norman Bordadora

MALACAÑANG yesterday said Congress should be allowed to do its duty under the Constitution and proceed with the impeachment trial of Chief Justice Renato Corona unimpaired by the Supreme Court.

Secretary Edwin Lacierda, President Aquino's spokesperson, issued the remark in the wake of several petitions filed before the Supreme Court questioning the manner by which the House considered the impeachment complaint against Corona to the Senate.

"The Constitution provides that the legislature is the one that will try, will impeach the Chief Justice, and the Senate will convict the Chief Justice. It's a rule that is reserved exclusively to the legislature," Lacierda told reporters in Malacañang.

Lacierda said the matter was now a political issue. It was up "to the representatives of the people to decide the fate of the Chief Justice," he said.

He suggested that it was not correct for the Supreme Court to rule on the questions brought before the tribunal regarding the impeachment now pending before the Senate.

"I think it will be more proper for the Supreme Court to let the process take its course because if it's going to stop the process then that would create a biased position in favor of one of its own members," Lacierda said. "So the impeachment process has begun and let it finish its course in the Senate."

A former president of the Integrated Bar of the Philippines on Tuesday asked the Supreme Court to stop the impending impeachment trial of Corona in the Senate.

Lawyer Vicente Millora asked the Supreme Court to issue a temporary restraining order to stop the Senate from hearing the impeachment complaint.

Millora's petition was the third filed before the Supreme Court on the issue. Two separate petitions questioning Corona's impeachment were filed on Monday by lawyer Vladimir Gilo-go and tax informer Imelda Libarnes.

Millora argued that the articles of impeachment should be declared null and void because members of the House of Representatives acted with grave abuse of discretion when they approved the complaints against Corona.

The lawyer said that the articles of impeachment did not go through the process prescribed in Section 3, Article XI of the Constitution.

Millora also said that the 188 congressmen who endorsed the impeachment complaint without reading it had "maneuvered in open conspiracy" with Malacañang.

CJ is target, Corona wife says of graft case

By Marlon Ramos

THE WIFE of impeached Chief Justice Renato Corona yesterday skipped the start of preliminary investigation of the graft case filed against her by a former employee of the Jose Rizal Memorial Med. Center (JRMMC) at the Department of Justice.

Instead of appearing at the proceeding, Mrs. Cristina Corona took her oath and submitted her counter-affidavit before Senior Deputy State Prosecutor Robert Anthony Fadullon several hours before the start of the preliminary hearing.

Mrs. Corona was a member of the board of directors of the JRMC, the main manager of the Camp John Hay Special Economic Zone, from 2001 and was appointed the firm's president and chair in 2007.

In her absence, lawyers Rene Jay Pabale represented Mrs. Corona during the preliminary investigation presided over by State Prosecutor Elmer Ballaran.

The case for "misappropriation of public funds" was filed by **Frank Zapata who accused Mrs.** Corona of illegally using over P177,000 in JRMC funds for the personal expenses during the last husband and their son Francis incurred while staying at the Baguio Country Club on separate occasions from 2006 to 2008.

Duero, a former JRMC spokesman, group manager, said the Coronas committed "conjugal rape of public funds."

In her counter-affidavit, Mrs. Corona vehemently denied that she violated government rules on disbursing public funds while she was an official of the JRMC.

She said the case accusations against her were "all here-to-fore" and "purely blank propaganda" intended to malign her husband who was impeached by the House of Representatives last week.

"It does not take much effort to see that this is directly and unequivocally connected to the political pressure by some quarters for my husband... to inhibit from certain cases pending in the Supreme Court or altogether resign from the Court," she said in her 17-page affidavit.

"The Chief Justice is clearly the target, not me," she added.

GOV'T WATCH

Serving and Protecting the Filipino Consumer

PNOY'S HIGH TRUST RATINGS SHOULD SET THE TONE FOR GOVERNANCE

The name "Aquino" has become a by-word for integrity, honesty, political & social change.

Senator Ninoy Aquino became the catalyst for the restoration of rights and freedoms.

President Cory Aquino fulfilled her promise to bring back democracy.

PNoy's trust ratings have shown a dramatic improvement from his time as a Senator, as seen in the latest Pulse Asia survey where he enjoys a high rating of 74%.

His first year as President was his learning curve in office. Now, he has shown assertiveness that has earned him the respect of leaders of other countries including US President Barack Obama who has invited him to a state visit.

As this year draws to an end, **GOV'T WATCH** joins the entire nation in looking forward to a new year with PNoy inspiring honesty, trust, and confidence in those governed.

A Merry and Blessed Christmas to All.

RAUL T. GONGCOPHON
Chairman

Your comments or suggestions on this issue are important to us:

Do you Agree or Disagree that PNOY's High Trust Ratings should set the tone for Governance?

GOV'T WATCH would like to get your comments or suggestions on it. Please send your views and comments to GOV'T WATCH via SMS: GLOBE 0935-9687777 and SMART 0948-7488888 via email: inbox@GOVTWATCH.net www.govtwatch.net

GOV'T WATCH

HK may free Singson soon

CAGAYAN (STT)—Former Ilocos Sur Rep. Ronald Singson may be released earlier than his 18-month jail sentence in Hong Kong for drug trafficking, according to his brother who took over his congressional seat.

The former congressman is expected to leave his detention facility in the second week of January, serving less than 13 months of his sentence, "probably for good behavior," Ilocos Sur Rep. Ryan Singson said yesterday.

Their father, Ilocos Sur Gov. Luis "Chavit" Singson, announced over ABC News Channel that Ronald would be released on Jan. 14.

Ronald was sentenced on Feb. 24 to 1 year and 6 months imprisonment by a Hong Kong Court Judge. He was arrested at Chek Lap Kok International Airport on July 11, 2011, for carrying 6.67 grams of cocaine and two tablets of the narcotic Ketamine (Tableta). He pleaded guilty, but his counsel argued successfully in court that the drugs were for his personal consumption and were not intended to be sold.

"We are excited to be with him. After his sentencing, we have not seen him anymore. We can only visit him twice a month. And the family is limited to three people for each visit," the governor said. "We want to see him to work, to handle our businesses and to help victims of drug addiction. I don't believe his career is over, to politics or the governor."

Leonardo Rodhein Jr. Inquirer Northern Luzon

SINGSON

OFWs ordered to flee from Syria

THE GOVERNMENT yesterday allowed in the 5,000 Filipinos out of Syria home for free as it again urged them to leave immediately to escape escalating violence, the foreign department said.

Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario said the government would help all Filipino overseas passage out of the Middle East country, which has been torn by deadly protests against President Bashar al-Assad's regime.

"In view of the escalating violence in Syria, the Department of Foreign Affairs will be raising alert level 4 for the entire country if Syria effective today," he said in a statement.

That alert status means all Filipinos would be repatriated as Philippine government expense, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) said.

About nine million Filipinos work around the world, earning more money in a wide range of skilled and unskilled jobs abroad than they could at home.

Last week, the Philippine embassy in Damascus sent home 31 of an estimated 5,000 Filipinos in Syria, the DFA said.

Since as early as April, the government has been urging its nationals in the country—most of them domestic helpers—to leave due to the worsening political violence. Whole towns heeded the warning, others have insisted on staying on.

Clashes this year most of the roughly 20,000 Filipinos working in Libya fled that country after unrest broke out.

On Tuesday, Manila said it would allow those former workers to return to the country, although it is maintaining a ban on new workers going there. AFP

Pilot erred, Parañaque crash probers conclude

By Tina G. Santos

THE PILOT of the ill-fated light cargo plane that crashed into a Westlodge neighborhood two weeks ago appeared to have been unable to perform the proper maneuvers in an emergency situation, according to officials of the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP).

The CAAP, in a press briefing yesterday detailing a preliminary result of its probe, said human factor and mechanical failure were the two most probable causes of the crash last Dec. 18, which left 14 people dead, including the pilot, and several others injured. Eleven of the victims perished in the hospital.

"We cannot say that he (pilot) panicked, what we're saying is that he appeared to have tried to come back [toward the run- way] but literally upon sensing that something was wrong with the aircraft," said Capt. Wendell Sollitman Jr., head of CAAP's aircraft accident investigation inquiry board.

Sollitman added that the pilot, Capt. Tito Arboy Alba, had already logged over 3,000 flying hours and had over 370 hours flying the Beechcraft Queen Air which crashed, making him a very proficient pilot.

Sollitman, however, could not explain why the pilot was not able to safely maneuver and land the plane.

He disclosed that apart from Alba, the co-pilot Jessie Kim Lustan, a student pilot identified as Adrie Bonado was on board the plane but not included in the fatalities.

One engine running

CAAP director general Ramon Gutierrez said that the twin-engine plane still had one engine running at the time of the incident.

According to Sollitman, a retired pilot, a multi-monitoring engine would require skillful maneuvering of the plane, especially when turning, but only the operating engine is used in times as already had situation.

He explained that in such situations, the standard operating procedure for pilots would be to gain more altitude first to get more control of the aircraft before heading back toward the airport to land.

"In that case, however, the video footage showed that the pilot hurriedly tried to head back toward the runway as he turned toward the direction of the dead engine, having opted in the process and making it turn sharply to the left, resulting in its deadly plunge," Sollitman said.

Sollitman further explained that twin-engine airplanes could fly and land even on a single engine.

"Pilots are trained to perform emergency maneuvers of and when an engine fails during flight," he added. "The pilots should have turned the aircraft to the right, or the direction where the operating engine is."

Gutierrez added that the aircraft's left engine suffered what appeared to be fuel starvation which have caused it to crash continuing, witnesses at the crash site. Gutierrez added that one of the engines was found sputtering before the plane banked steeply to the left then plunged to the ground.

BBDO bags DOT account

By Jo-ann Ating

THE DEPARTMENT of Tourism (DOT) has selected a multinational advertising agency to craft the Philippines' new tourism slogan.

The Makati City-based BBDO Guerrero Proximity Philippines was named the "agency of record" for the DOT, making the winning pitch and bid for the country's tourism branding campaign.

According to the DOT, the firm will be tasked with "creating an idea that will shape all forms of communication for the country's domestic and international tourism promotions."

In a statement posted on its website, Ramil Guerrero, BBDO Guerrero chair and chief creative officer, said the company accepts the challenge of the tourism branding campaign.

"The competition is global. And our responsibility is very local. There could be no better motivation to meet and exceed the most demanding one of the world's most enjoyable travel experiences. We...and our worldwide network—are looking forward to making this a truly memorable and effective campaign that will benefit all of us who live here," he said.

BBDO won over seven other advertising agencies such as Aruga Advertising Inc., BSB Philippines Inc., Dentsu Philippines Inc., J. Romero & Associates Inc., MWWJ, Publico Thompson, Lowe Inc., and Young & Rubicam Philippines Inc.

The DOT said BBDO Guerrero's concept was already at the creative and the "first iteration" of the new campaign would emerge within the first half of 2012.

The bidding for the branding campaign project covered only the crafting of the slogan and marketing concept; the DOT will remain in charge of implementing the campaign through radio, visual and print ads.

Correction

IN THE DEC. 22 ISSUE, a front page story—"Mistletoe, Visayas to have color Christmas"—contained a sentence that erroneously translated "amihan" as the southeast monsoon. Amihan is the local term for the northeast monsoon.

METRO MANILA

CALOOCAN
Caloocan - R. Mateo/Caloocan - Samgyeobsal, Grace Park

MAKATI
Cash & Carry
Gotesco
Mall Hypermarket - Makati
Mr. Minit
Southgate Mall EDSA

MALABON / NAVOTAS / VALENZUELA
Navotas
Sm Supercenter Valenzuela

MANILA
Central Market - Legarda/Lacson
Ilang-Ilang
Harrison Plaza
Nepomuceno
Pedro Gil Area - Pedro Gil Road Avenue
Rizal Avenue - Bambang
Rizal Avenue - Pilipinas-Marcos
San Andres
Sm City Manila
Sm City San Lazaro
Sm Hypermarket - Ayala Blvd
Sudbury - Dagupan-gen - Tutuban - Centennial

MARIKINA / RIZAL
Angono - R.N.
Quezon Ave.
Antipolo - Sm Sidmere
Arty Mall
Circumferential Road
Ambassy Plaza
Cogeo - Sumulong
Highway
Hapchua
Marcos Highway
Marikina - Concepcion
Marikina - Lamuan
Marikina - Sumulong Highway
Bond - Genoa
Bond - Tandalan
Sm City Masinag
Sm City Rosario
Sm City Sucat
Sm Lucky East
Sm Lucky East Cainta
Pala-Isaacan

PARAÑAQUE / MUNTINLUPA / LAS PIÑAS
Alabang - Madrigal Ave.
Alabang - Muntinlupa
Alabang Hills
Bettyr Living
Sm Hypermarket - Sucat
Sm Hypermarket - Sucat
Sm Homes - Parañaque
Las Piñas - Sm Homes - Daanghari
Philamlife Avenue
Manukan-aui - Philamlife NAIA

Parañaque - Wawawork
Sm Center Las Piñas
Sm City Bicutan
Sm City Sucat
Sm City Sucat B
Sm Southmall
Sm Southmall B
Sm Supercenter Muntinlupa
Sunmall Alabang

PASAY
Baclaran
Baclaran - Redemptorist Road
Libertad - Libertad
Airports World Manila
Sm Mall of Asia A
Sm Mall of Asia B

PASIG / MANDALUYONG
Ortigas Center
Ortigas Ave. Ext. - St. Joseph
Pasig - Caruncho
Pasig - Kapasigan
Robinson's Metro East
Shaw Blvd - Amang Rodriguez
Shaw Blvd - Nagpayong
Shaw Blvd - Pasig Blvd EDSA
Sm Megamall A
Sm Megamall B
Sm Supercenter Pasig

QUEZON CITY
Aurora Boulevard
Aurora Blvd. - Anonas
Batasan - Kalayaan
Commonwealth
Cubao Diocesan Arsenio
Cubao - Gen. T. De Rodriguez Jr. Ave.
Kalayaan City - Olympia
Highway
Ever New Farmers Plaza
Mecha Residences
Robinson's Galleria Ortigas
Sm City Fairview A
Sm City Fairview B
Sm City Fairview C
Sm City North - EDSA A
Sm City North - EDSA B
Sm City North - EDSA C
Sm City Novaliches
Sm City Sta. Mesa
Sm City Sta. Mesa
Sm Hypermarket Cubao
St. Ignatius - Kalayaan
Walter Mart North EDSA

SAN JUAN
Blumentritt - San Juan
Robinsons Shopping Center Ortigas

TAGUIG
Bonifacio Global City - Market Market
Bonifacio Global City - Sm Aura
Bonifacio Global City - St. Luke's

LUZON

BATANGAS
Batangas - Pallocan
Batangas - Kumintang
Batangas - Lemery
Batangas - Nasugbu

Batangas - P. Burgos
Batangas - Rosario
Batangas City - Rizal Ave.
Lipa - Ayala Highway
Lipa - Marauoy
Lipa - Rizal/Quezon Road
Mabacong - Calaca
Sm City Batangas
Sm City Lipa
Tanauan - Jp Laurel

BICOL
Albay - Daraga
Albay - Penaranda
Albay - Rawis
Albay - Tabaco
Legazpi City - Rizal
Legazpi City - Victoria
Naga City
Naga City - Roxcela
Naga - San Francisco
Naga - General Luna
Sm City Naga

BULACAN
Baliwag - Jp Rizal
Baliwag - Sto. Rosario
Gen. T. Pascual
Malolos - Mcarthur Highway
Meycauayan - Malhacan/Mcarthur Highway
Meycauayan - Sm City Marilao
Sm City Marilao
Valenzuela - Sta. Maria

CAVITE
Bacoor - Aguinaldo Highway
Cavite - Diamond Rd.
Cavite - Governor Ferraris
Cavite - Imus
Cavite - Tirona Highway
Dasmarinas - Paseo De Dasmarinas
Gen. Trias - Governor Ferraris
Sm Center Molino
Sm City Bacoor
Sm City Dasmarinas
Sm City Dasmarinas Annex
Tagaytay - Nasugbu
Tagaytay - Rotonda

LAGUNA
Biñan - A. Mabini
Calamba Crossing - North
Calamba - Crossing - South
Calamba - Sm City Calamba
Calamba - Pansol
San Pedro - National Highway
San Pedro - Rosario
Cabuyao
Sm City Cabuyao
Sm City Sta. Rosa
Sta. Rosa - Tagapo
Sta. Rosa - Tiongson Annex

NORTH CENTRAL LUZON
Angeles
Magsaysay - Samanillo
Magsaysay - Perez
Nangalisan - Mamerto
Nangalisan - Sapalibutad
Nangalisan - San Carlos
Sm City Rosales
Sm City Tarlac

Tarlac - Concepcion
Tarlac - F. Tobias
Tarlac - Romulo
Urdaneta - MacArthur Highway

NORTH EASTERN LUZON
Cabanatuan - Paco Roman
Cabanatuan - Sumacab - Maharlikan Mall
Cabanatuan - Sumacab - Maharlika Highway
Gapan - Malasin
Gapan - San Vicente
Nueva Ecija - Bitas
Nueva Ecija - Talavera
Nueva Ecija - Talavera - Bonifacio St.

NORTH WESTERN LUZON
Bagabag - Lantad
Bagabag - Jawassi Road
Bagabag - Quirino Square
Bayombong - La Trinidad
La Union San Fernando - Quezon Avenue
La Union San Fernando - Rizal Ave.
Lingayen - Dagupan
Robinson's Place San Nicolas
Sm City Bagabag
Vigan - Gaddon Avenue

PALAWAN
Puerto Princesa

PAMPANGA
Angeles - Sto. Rosario
Angeles City - Balibago
Dolores - Z. Samson
Dolores
Mabalacat - Bypass
Mabalacat - Dau
Mabalacat - Dau - Sm Hypermarket
Mabalacat - Jp Laurel
Mabalacat - Mcarthur Highway
Sm City Clark
Sm City Pampanga A
Sm City Pampanga B
Sm Hypermarket Pampanga
Zambales - Iba

QUEZON PROVINCE
Lucena - Quezon Ave.
Sm City Lucena

VISAYAS

Bacolod - Gatuslao
Bacolod - Libertad
Bacolod - Lopez
Bacolod - Reclamation/Jt Park
Cebu - Banilad
Cebu - Bogo
Cebu - Bonifacio
Cebu - Colonnade
Cebu - Corporate Center
Cebu - Gonzales
Cebu - Ramos
Cebu - Puente Cebu
Cebu - Quezon Metropolitan
Cebu - Quezon Blvd.
Cebu - Sm City
Cebu - Sm Hypermarket
Cebu - Talamban
Cebu - Tejero
Cebu - Urgello
Iloilo - Diversion
Iloilo - Jaro
Iloilo - Mandurriao
Iloilo - Molo
Iloilo - Ortiz
Iloilo - Sm City
Iloilo - Tagbak
Iloilo - Tagbak - Sm Hypermarket
Iloilo - Tagbak - Sm Hypermarket
Iloilo - Tagbak - Sm Hypermarket

Compassion flows from calamity-scarred areas

By Joey Gabieta, Cecil Gomez and Nestor Burgos Jr.
Inquirer Visayas

TACLOBAN CITY—The local government of Ormoc, Leyte, where flash floods killed more than 5,000 people two decades ago, has joined the growing list of humanitarian donors for the victims of Tropical Storm "Sendong."

The city that has been cocked to the mercy of typhoons for suffering one of the most horrific environmental disasters in the country is donating P1.5 million to the cities in Northern Mindanao and parts of the Visayas which were ravaged by Sendong.

"We commiserate with the victims of the calamity and this donation is our way of showing our deep sorrow, in the spirit of brotherhood. We were once [victims] of a massive tragedy and we also received assistance from others," Ormoc City Councilor Jose Ellis said, in a phone interview on Thursday.

Mayor was referring to the flash floods that hit Ormoc on Nov. 1, 1991, at the height of Typhoon "Uring."

The devastated cities of Iligan and Cagayan de Oro and the town of Valencia in Negros Oriental province were the local government units (LGUs) that received the most aid.

On Wednesday, the Negros Occidental provincial board set aside a P1.5-million contribution to the relief efforts, according to Vice Gov. Genaro Alvarez.

The P1.5-million donation would be taken from the province's unreleased calamity fund for this year, which totaled P88 million, said Board Member Salvador Escalante.

The provincial board of Aklan, a province adjoining the south of Typhoon "Pablo" in 2008, also approved on Wednesday the release of P200,000 each for Cagayan de Oro and Iligan.

More donations

Donations big and small from private individuals, organizations, and business groups also continued to pour in.

The Ambassadors group of Barangay Fabrica in Sagay City gave P20,000, while the University of St. La Salle raised P933,915 through its "Kandilang Pagmamahal" (Help Mindanao) campaign.

The Diocese of Kidapawan in Aklan province, led by Bishop Jose Corazon Tala-oc, sent a total of P50,000 to Cagayan de Oro and Iligan.

Residents of the resort island of Boracay and the local government of Malay town, where the island is located, have also started campaigning for donations, and P1.5 million in the relief effort, according to Vice Gov. Gerardo

Taipan kicks off Mindanao relief drive

By Jerry E. Esplanada

TAIPAN Lucio Tan is doing his share to help the flash flood victims in northern Mindanao, according to an official of Philippine Airlines (PAL), one of the firms belonging to the Chinese-Filipino businessman.

Jaime de Guzman, PAL vice president for corporate communications, yesterday told the business that "the Lucio Tan Group's (LTG) relief drive actually left Manila with the distribution of ready-to-eat food, water, medicines and other relief as well as body bags in various areas hit by flood waters due to Tropical Storm "Sendong."

"(It's) donations include relief goods for 10,000 families, 250,000 bottles of Absolute Distilled Emergency water, 10,000 alcohol and dipper, five mobile water purifying stations from Agua Vida are also en route by sea and will arrive in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan cities by Dec. 25," De Guzman disclosed.

The water stations are capable of producing 16,000 liters of clean potable water per day, he said.

Through the Tan Yan Kee Foundation (TYKF), the Fu Hsang Shan Temple in Taipei donated 1,000 body bags and 1,000 blankets which were airlifted by PAL from the Taiwan capital. They were delivered by PAL to Cagayan de Oro for immediate distribution by staff of Taichung Brothers and the Tan owned firm.

In cooperation with the TYKF, the American Chamber of Commerce will send "tenting," or abaca buildings and mosquito nets, along with 2,000 packages of instant noodles, rice and water, said Dr Guzman, a former print journalist.

On Tuesday, Tan, along with top officials of the Federation of Filipino-Chinese Chambers of Commerce and Industry, flew to Cagayan de Oro City to survey for themselves the devastation caused by the floods and "check out the urgent needs of the victims," he added.

TAIPAN Lucio Tan and Willy Lim Seneriong, president of the Cagayan de Oro Chinese Chamber of Commerce and Industry, inspect the initial batch of relief goods due here this Tuesday via the city

Tax relief for bonuses

By Christian V. Esguerra

TWO SENATORS have filed separate bills allowing a greater number of Filipino workers to enjoy their Christmas bonuses and 13th month pay tax-free.

To achieve this, the measures authored by Senators Alfredo Benigno Sotto and Ralph Recto seek to amend Section 32 of the National Internal Revenue Code. The current provision exempts from tax gross benefits worth less than P30,000.

Santiago's Senate Bill No. 2739 raises the ceiling to P40,000 while Recto's Senate Bill No. 2879 pegs it at P60,000.

In his bill's explanatory note, Recto argued that the prevailing ceiling for tax exemption "does not mirror prevailing circumstances."

"The ceiling of P30,000 for the exemption does not apply today as it did when it was incorporated in the tax code," he said.

"The law should always be responsive to the needs of the people. An increase in the ceiling of this particular tax exemption is one of the reliefs the people need during these hard times."

Jennings stated that Christmas bonuses and related benefits "come only once a year and in a time when prices of commodities increase because of the demand for more food on the table to celebrate the season."

Pura Angeles, 89

PURA Castañeda-Angeles, widow of Nicki Angeles, died on Dec. 11 at the age of 89.

She is survived by her children Adriano, Paula, Delfin, Antonetta, Herman and Cristina.

Her remains lie at the Our Lady of the Abandoned church in Sta. Ana, Manila.

Memorial service will be held tomorrow at 9 a.m. at Our Mary Help of Christians Shrine in Better Living, Parañaque City. Interment follows at the Manila Memorial Park in Sucat.

THE DAILY GOSPEL

DECEMBER 23 (Friday)
Feather: Week 4
John of Kanty o 4th Week of Advent
Ps 23:4-6 (ref). 8-9, 10 and 14
Lift up your heads and see; your redemption is near at hand.

1st Reading: Mal 3:1-4, 23-24

Now I am sending my messenger ahead of me to clear the way. Immediately the Lord for whom you long will enter the sanctuary. The envoy of the covenant whom you so greatly desire already comes, says Yahweh of hosts. Who can bear the day of his coming and remain standing when he appears? For he will be like fire to the founder and like the lye used for bleaching.

He will sit as refiner and as fuller. He will purify the sons of Levi and refine them like gold and silver. So Yahweh will have priests who will present the offerings as it should be. Then Yahweh will accept with pleasure the offerings of Judah and Jerusalem, as in former days. I am going to send you the prophet Elijah before the day of Yahweh comes, that is to say the great and terrible day. He will reconcile parents with their children, and the children with their parents; so that I may not have to come this land when I come."

Gospel: LK 1:57-66

When the time came for Elizabeth, she gave birth to a son. Her neighbors and relatives heard that the merciful Lord had done a wonderful thing for her and they rejoiced with her.

When on the eighth day they came to attend the circumcision of the child, they wanted to name him Zechariah after his father. But his mother said, "We are to be called John."

They said to her, "No one in your family has that name"; and they asked the father by means of signs for the name he wanted to give. He then asked for a writing tablet and wrote on it, "His name is John," and they were very surprised. Immediately Zechariah could speak again and he then made some to praise of God.

A holy fear came on all in the neighborhood, and throughout the hills of Judea the people talked about these events. All who heard of it pondered in their minds and wondered, "What will this child be?" for they understood that the hand of the Lord was with him.

Reflection:

God fulfills his promise and he expects us to carry out our commitment. This is the case with Zechariah. By naming his son John, he accepted his mission of his son in the great plan of God for our salvation. Do I assume my responsibilities as God's children?

AIRLINE PROMO FARES
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Shun plastics this season–DENR

By Kristine L. Alave

ENVIRONMENT Secretary Ramon Paje yesterday appealed to the public to reduce the use of plastic materials and Styrofoam containers when they celebrate the holidays.

"There is no stopping us in starting making this holiday season Christmas still always be the most awaited event in our Christian life, and food is always one of the most important ingredients that make gatherings enjoyable," Paje reminded participants to think about the impact of their selections on the environment and find ways to reduce their carbon footprint.

"There are definitely a thousand ways that we could do to help mother earth's resource from escalating health—from tree growing and gardening to using recyclable bags to wrap our gifts, to not littering these holiday-shopping New Year or as we're to add to an public trash," Paje stressed.

He also urged companies and communities to follow the department's practice of banning plastic utensils and polystyrene food containers in their events. Caterers are also told to use reusable materials in their food presentations.

Paje said enforcement such drainage systems is one of the major causes of floods and disease outbreaks such as dengue, cholera, and skin diseases.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources said Metro Manila produced about 8,400 to 8,600 tons of trash per day.

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PH eyes closure to Naia 3 dispute with Germany

THE PHILIPPINES is trying to put a "closure" to the Fraport-Manny Pangilinan International Airport (Piatco) Terminal 3 case, which has stalled relations between the Philippines and Germany in the past 10 years, according to Foreign Secretary Albert del Rosario.

Speaking in Foreign Affairs reporters, Del Rosario on Wednesday expressed confidence that between the two countries could finally "move forward."

"The Fraport [controversy] is not the sum total of Philippines-Germany relations," he said instead of facility.

But he acknowledged that because of the issue, there was some sort of "freezing of relations" between the two nations.

Del Rosario, who visited Germany early this month, disclosed they were "trying to find ways of moving forward in our economic, political and cultural relations."

"What remains to be compassionate package — and I told [German government officials] that the Philippine government has made serious efforts in arriving at a fair and just resolution to the Fraport case," he said.

During his recent meeting with Germany's Minister of State Werner Hoyer and Guido Westerwelle, his German counterpart, the Department of Foreign Affairs chief asserted that the Fraport case should not be used as the two countries' bilateral relations.

"We briefly discussed if any separate track can be pursued," he said.

Fraport is the foreign partner in the Philippine International Airport Terminal Company (Piatco), the consortium that bagged the contract to build Naia Terminal 3.

In 2002, Manila nullified the contract over allegations that the private firm violated anti-dummy regulations.

Fraport promptly filed a compensation case before the World Bank's International Center for Settlement of Investment Disputes, citing violations of the bilateral investment treaty between Manila and Berlin.

Parts past, Piatco filed a damage suit before the Singapore-based International Chamber of Commerce (ICC).

Last year, the ICC ruled in favor of the Philippine government, but Piatco has appealed the decision. In November, the Singapore High Court dismissed Piatco's petition for compensation, upholding the ICC ruling. Jerry E. Esplanada

IN THE MATTER OF THE IMPEACHMENT OF CHIEF JUSTICE RENATO CORONA

We, the WOMEN TRIAL LAWYERS ORGANIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINES, all of us members of the legal profession and the public in general, all kind of women and allow such or equal breach of government to perform their respective mandates under the Constitution;

It cannot be denied that the Hon. Renato Corona, his kin, the subject of various controversies since his appointment was appointed as Chief Justice under cover of this, during his term Commission and decisions made by the high court, such is the 18 month period not to the critical January decisions in relation and outside the legal profession.

The House of Representatives, as the overseer of its constitutional authority has determined necessary to file Articles of Impeachment against the Chief Justice, which have been more duly transmitted to the Senate of the Senators of the Philippines. There were numerous acts, and omissions of the Senate during eight (8) sessions and public personnel to which the Chief Justice is responsible;

I. RESPONDENT BETRAYED THE PUBLIC TRUST THROUGH HIS TRACK RECORD MARRED BY PARTIALITY AND CORRUPTION IN CLOSE PROXIMITY THE ARROYO ADMINISTRATION FROM THE TIME OF HIS APPOINTMENT AS SUPREME COURT JUSTICE WHICH CONTINUED TO THE HIGHEST APPOINTMENT AS A SUPREME COURT JUSTICE AND UP TO THE PRESENT;

II. RESPONDENT COMMITTED CULPABLE VIOLATION OF THE CONSTITUTION AND/OR BETRAYED THE PUBLIC TRUST WHEN HE FAILED TO DISCLOSE TO THE PUBLIC HIS STATEMENT OF ASSETS, LIABILITIES, AND NET WORTH AS REQUIRED UNDER SEC. 17, ART. XI OF THE 1987 CONSTITUTION;

III. RESPONDENT COMMITTED CULPABLE VIOLATION OF THE CONSTITUTION AND BETRAYED THE PUBLIC TRUST BY MAKING OF FRONT AND ORIGINAL SUCH STATEMENT CONTAINED UNDER ART. VIII, SECTION 7 (3) OF THE CONSTITUTION THAT PROVIDES THAT [A] MEMBER OF THE JUDICIARY MUST BE A PERSON OF PROVEN COMPETENCE, INTEGRITY, PROBITY AND INDEPENDENCE IT ALLOWING THE SUPREME COURT TO ACT ON ABSOLUTELY FAILED IN A GENERAL SENSE CAUSED THE ABSENCE OF FAITH-KEEPING BECOMING IS FINAL AND DEFINITIVE GRADE OF OBJECTIVE AN EMPHASIS ESTABLISHMENT WITH THE ASSESSOR TO DECIDE AND APPLIED MOST OF HIS WORK TO APPEAL AND IS DECIDING WITH CITIZEN'S REGARDING CODE PERSONS BEFORE THE SUPREME COURT;

IV. RESPONDENT BETRAYED THE PUBLIC TRUST AND/OR COMMITTED CULPABLE VIOLATION OF THE CONSTITUTION WHEN IT ILLEGALLY DISREGARDED THE PHASING OF SEPARATION OF POWERS BY ISSUING A SPEECH QUO ANTE ORDER AGAINST THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVE IN THE CASE CONCERNING THE IMPEACHMENT OF THEN OMBUDSMAN MERCEDITAS GUTIERREZ;

V. RESPONDENT COMMITTED CULPABLE VIOLATION OF THE CONSTITUTION THROUGH HASTILY ADMINISTERING AND PARTIALITY IN CONSISTENTLY DISREGARDING THE PRINCIPLE OF RES JUDICATA AND IN DECIDING IN FAVOR OF GERRY SANDIGANG AS THE CASES INVOLVING THE 12 SERIES CRIMINAL CASES AND THE PROMOTION OF HUMAN CLAIMS IN IN A PROVINCE;

VI. RESPONDENT BETRAYED THE PUBLIC TRUST BY ARROGATING UNTO HIMSELF AND TO A COMMITTEE OF HIS CHOICE THE AUTHORITY AND JURISDICTION TO UNDERTAKE INVESTIGATE AN ALLEGED BRIBE-TAKING BY THE SENATORS OVER AND THE PURPOSE OF EXCLUSIVE AND SOLE AUTHORITY AND JURISDICTION IS PROPERLY VESTED IN THE CONSTITUTION IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES FOR IMPEACHMENT;

VII. RESPONDENT BETRAYED THE PUBLIC TRUST THROUGH HIS PARTIALITY IN GRANTING A TEMPORARY RESTRAINING ORDER (TRO) IN FAVOR OF FORMER PRESIDENT GLORIA MACAPAGAL ARROYO WHO EVIDENCE HAS PROVED, ARROYO IS GUILTY OF GIVING THEM AN OPPORTUNITY TO DELAY PROSECUTION AND TO FRUSTRATE THE ENDS OF JUSTICE, AND IS CONTINUING AND AUTHORITY CONTRARY TO THE EFFECTIVITY OF THE TRO IN VIEW OF A CLEAR FAILURE TO COMPLY WITH THE CONDITIONS OF THE SUPREME COURT'S ORDER TRO;

VIII. RESPONDENT BETRAYED THE PUBLIC TRUST AND CONFIDENCE WHEN HE FAILED AND REFUSED TO ACCOUNT FOR THE JUDICIARY DEVELOPMENT FUND (JDF) AND SPECIAL ALLOWANCE FOR THE JUDICIARY (SAJ) FUNDS WHICH FORMS;

Whether the grounds may be present or not, the provisions of the Constitution are clear. Impeachment is the correct legal process to remove the President, the Vice-President, the Supreme Court Justices, Members of the Constitutional Commissions, and the Ombudsman and no other. Impeachment is not an effort of the individuals to attack the incumbent belongs. It is an integral part of the system of checks and balances between the three power branches of government. It is a mechanism by which government members of the any members of a recognized branch can be carried to account irrespective damage to the other three branches can be taken down from the pedestal.

The filing of an impeachment complaint against a Justice of the High Court does not a constitutional crisis make. It is not an offense not to be treated as an attack on the Judiciary, no more than the impeachment against the former President Estrada was ever an attack against the entire Executive Department. A credible Judiciary will remain steadfast and strong for as long as it keeps faith with the Constitution.

The impeachment mechanism is not to remove a sitting officer. Any legal action sitting on the Supreme Court must survive both judicial review and contemporary – law enforcement and action remaining the highest public interest.

It is for this reason that we, as members of the bar, stand before our conscience. We confer that we will, in front of the people, exercise duty of the lawyer. Let the evidence be presented and the appropriate sentence be imposed. The power of the House to impeach does not mean the authority of the Senate. Only the Chief Justice is not only to confess the public, and further under this is the many other branches.

The justice must confirm and accountability to not as easy one. However, it does push that we as citizens must not only have chosen.

Signed this 19th day of December 2011.

WOMEN TRIAL LAWYERS ORGANIZATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

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Poll ruling confuses Imus execs

By Marlear Cleco, Inquirer Southern Luzon

THE UNSEATED mayor of Imus town in Cavite, Homer Saquilayan, has refused to relinquish his post amid conflicting interpretation of a ruling issued Thursday by the Commission on Elections (Comelec).

Saquilayan insisted the Comelec First Division headed by Commissioner Rene Sarmiento had issued a 60-day temporary restraining order (TRO) in his favor that stopped his rival, Emmanuel Maliksi, from assuming as mayor.

Maliksi, however, insisted that the TRO issued Wednesday was invalid because while the resolution was signed by Sarmiento and the two other division commissioners—Armando Velasco and Christian Robert Lim—the latter two had handwritten dissenting opinions above their signatures.

To Maliksi, it meant that with Sarmiento outnumbered by the two commissioners, the Comelec has forfeited upheld the Imus Regional Trial Court ruling that declared him winner and ordered him installed as the duly elected mayor of Imus in the 2016 elections.

The confusing Comelec order, dated Dec. 20 and the Comelec First Division ruled to issue a 60-day TRO, as petitioned by Saquilayan, and ordered Imus RTC Judge Cesar Mangrobang to "restore and desist" from implementing the court's decision to oust Maliksi as the rightful winner in the 2016 mayoral race.

The Imus RTC, after a manual recount of the votes, ruled on Nov. 15 that Maliksi of the Liberal Party won by 665 votes against Saquilayan of the Nacionalista Party.

Maliksi acknowledged that the order created a "legal crisis" since, while it was correct to issue a TRO, the majority dissenting opinions it embodied also in effect rejected the TRO.

Nonetheless, Maliksi said he would not insist on assuming the mayoral office now and would instead wait for the Imus RTC's writ of execution to be issued on Dec. 28 for him to assume post.

In Manila, Sarmiento on Wednesday said, "There is no TRO due to the two against one vote for the non-issuance of a TRO." He said he was outvoted by his fellow division members.

Sarmiento said Saquilayan cannot appeal the division's ruling to the Comelec en banc in accordance with Comelec rules of procedure. Unless Saquilayan appeals to a higher body such as the Supreme Court and secures another TRO on the Comelec's decision, Maliksi would be the seated mayor while the case is pending before the division, Sarmiento said. With Aroma Aning in Manila

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WAITING FOR THE DEAD
Piles of coffins lie inside the Zamboanga del Sur Reformatory Center at Barangay San Jose in Pagadian City. The coffins were dumped by Iligan City by JO Wisconsin Mendanez and the Zamboanga del Sur provincial government.

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Media group helps colleagues in typhoon-ravaged areas

By Dalila T. Maller Jr.
Inquirer Southern Luzon

LUCENA CITY—The National Union of Journalists of the Philippines has launched the "Tabang Media" (TM) campaign to lend a hand to suffering colleagues in Mindanao who were also victims of Tropical Storm "Sendong."

"It was in response to cries for help by colleagues who, while needing to find shelter, dry clothes and food for their children, still have to shoot pictures and file stories about their own ravaged communities," Eleonora Corcuera Pontaoe, NUJP secretary general, said in her post in TM Facebook page.

"Tabang" means help in the Visayan Cebuano dialect.

TM is an initiative of the NUJP together with the Center for Community Journalism and Development and the Peace and Conflict Journalism Network to help colleagues in media severely affected by Sendong.

Although they have yet to complete the final list of affected media workers, Pontaoe said two journalists were killed while the homes of more than 50 journalists in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan Cities were wiped out by the raging flash floods.

"Many have lost their houses and all their belongings. Delivery of goods remains difficult and they have expressed that cash assistance is the most practical," TM said in its Facebook page.

"Let us help our fellow journalists get by with volunteer help we can give," the group said in its appeal to their colleagues across the country.

TM reported that the members of the Hungarian media pledged an initial amount of P58,000 while the Freedom Fund for Filipino Journalists also pledged to give to affected media colleagues.

The Foreign Correspondents Association of the Philippines, Center for Community Journalism and Development and MAP donated several boxes of bags and clothing and beverages, TM said.

The TM Facebook page which was created last Monday would serve as a venue for Filipino journalists to quickly response to their need of their comrades in times of emergencies such as disasters.

Other media organizations are welcome to join TM, Pontaoe said.

Those who want to donate to the campaign can deposit any amount at the NUJP account (Metrobank account number 228-723-9587-4981 or call/cash 0930-4950895 or the NUJP office (921) 376-7305).

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Kin of Isabela fire victims hit slow grind of justice

By Melvin Gascon
Inquirer Northern Luzon

TUGUEGARAO City—"Don't worry mama. I will be one of those in the top ten," Estelita Herrera, 63, guessed her son as saying, before he kissed her goodbye as he boarded the bus for Santiago City in Isabela.

It was the last time she would see her youngest son alive.

"Naturally, I had thoughts that he was confident to bind among the topnotchers for the nursing board exam[s]. As it turned out, he meant it deliberately," said Herrera in tears.

Marlon Jamie Viernes, then 27, was one of the 10 graduates and nursing reviewees undressed from the University of La Salette (ULS) in Santiago City who were killed in a predawn fire that gutted the inn where they were staying on Dec. 19 last year.

They were to take the nursing board examinations on that day.

Also killed were five members of the Rondevilla family: Mildred Rondevilla De Leon and her two children Caryl Anne, 13, and Josh, 6; Mildred's brother-in-law Antonio Jr., and his wife Antonette, who was also a law member in the program with their first child, and Antonette's daughter Jennifer by a previous marriage.

The family-owned two-storey building that served as their residence and also housed the Bed & Breakfast Pension Hotel, the Sunshine Motorcycle Parts and the 88s Sunshine Marketing in Barangay Centro 2 here.

Of the rest 10 occupants that night, 16 people, including 10 nursing examinees, survived. But a year after the fire, the families of the victims have decried the slow grind of justice for their lost loved ones.

"It only reminds us that one year had passed, and we have achieved almost nothing. We are becoming victims all over again, this time, of the slow movement of justice in this country," said Marlon's father, Manuel Viernes, the leader of the victims' families.

So far, no criminal charges have been filed against those responsible for the deaths of Viernes, Francis Carandang, Jose Julius Gubbuang, Ned Jessrey Lopez, Shelmar Galagate, Richard Allen Estrada, Rhea Janice Matalia, Jennalyn Sanz, Bernadeth Bonpicio, Hershenet Villalobos Jr., all residents of Isabela.

Lawyer Romel Nicolas, head of the Department of Justice Department of Interior and Local Government (DOJ-DILG) fact-finding body that Malacañang formed to investigate the incident, said he was not aware of any related criminal complaint filed before the prosecutor's office or any of the courts here.

He said his office had received motion from the office of Interior Secretary Jesse Robredo that a complaint had been filed by the Investigative Assistance Task Force before the DOJ in Manila in January, but they have heard nothing of it since.

In a 20-page report released a month after the tragedy, the DOJ-DILG panel recommended the filing of criminal charges against building owners Espiritu and Avanceña Rondevilla, administrative sanctions against five mid-city officials led by Mayor Delfin Ting and ULS officials for civil liability.

It also noted the sheer lack of equipment of firefighters that prevented them from promptly rescuing the victims, many of whom were trapped and suffocated inside the building's grilled windows and a blocked fire escape.

"We were expecting the local police to file charges. The panel I handed counter-affidavit (the criminal complaint) because I was the designated prosecutor who will conduct the preliminary investigations, if ever rats was filed," said Nicolas, also the assistant regional state prosecutor.

Cagayan police director Senior Supt. Rhio Ephraim said the local police has not initiated any criminal complaint because it has not been notified of the panel's findings.

"If only we were furnished a copy of that report, and [the panel] recommended that the [NBI will file the complaints, those would have been an easier for us not to have acted on it," he said.

In May 2011, nine of the 10 victims' parents filed a P22.5-million damage suit against the ULS, the Rondevilla couple and the Tuguegarao City government before the Regional Trial Court in Tuguegarao town in Isabela.

They also asked for P15 million in damages for each victim. (The lone parent of Carandang, 31, Christopher Arellano, begged off as a complainant, having a member of the La Salette congregation and director of La Salette School in Roxas, Isabela).

They blamed the ULS for the alleged failure of its officials and instructors to look after the welfare of their examinees; the Rondevillas for operating the Bed & Breakfast without a mayor's permit and the city government for tolerating the operations of the hotel.

For its defense, the ULS said it could not be held liable because at the time of the tragedy, the victims were no longer students of the university and thus no contractual relation existed between them and the victims.

The Rondevillas, on the other hand, said it was their son Jeremiah Michael, who was among those killed, and not they, who owned and operated the hotel, who should be prosecuted.

The city government maintained that its officials and personnel committed no wrongdoing in the performance of their duties, according to court records.

During the Dec. 14 hearing, Judge Estelbarito Ong ordered the parties to submit their positions before the Philippine Mediation Center in Santiago City for a possible out-of-court settlement, as required by law.

"My, are confident we will emerge victorious. The only question is when?" said Isabelita Almario, the families' counsel.

The long wait for the filing of a criminal suit prompted the families earlier this month to engage a separate counsel, Tuguegarao-based lawyer Placido Sobilan, who had just begun gathering pieces of evidence to determine who to implicate in the homicide charges.

Sobilan said the parents, who are acting as complainants, had wanted a criminal case to be filed immediately as a symbolic break through as they started the first anniversary of the tragedy.

"Unfortunately, I had to tell the families that it cannot be done because of lack of time. The current risk filing a hastily prepared complaint that may just end up in failure," he said.

The Rondevilla couple expressed frustration that investigators would prevail in the hearts of the victims' families, saying the fire was "a tragedy that nobody wanted to happen."

"What happened was painful for us, too. Sometimes people forget that we lost everything in that fire—our only two children, our only two grandchildren and a daughter-in-law, who was bearing out their grandchild," Rondevilla said.

THE GUTTED Bed & Breakfast Pension House in downtown Tuguegarao City stands as a grim reminder for residents and visitors of the Dec. 19, 2010 fire tragedy that killed 14 persons, 10 of them nursing board examinees. To the families of the victims, the building has become a symbol of government neglect. TOMAS ANDRES JR./INQUIRER NORTHERN LUZON

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Mercury drug

Town fire station urges revelers vs firecrackers

By Armand Galang
Inquirer Central Luzon

MIMOS, Nueva Ecija—Residents of this farming town have another reason to abstain from firecrackers this Yuletide season.

Despite the heightened alert declared by the Bureau of Fire Protection (BFP), Mimos's lone fire truck has been idle since September and still way in to service order for the BFP office's budget to purchase a new engine or change a transmission system, said Senior Fire Officer 3 Ruvens Eduhoso, acting municipal fire marshal.

Eduhoso said he had asked the Central Luzon office of the BFP and the office of Mayor Marital Vargas for funds.

While both offices have assured him of help, an immediate relief can be expected.

"The municipality is now looking for a transmission system in Metro Manila and in other places," he said.

He said he had recommended to the regional BFP a change of engine, which would cost some 150,000, but officials told him no funds were available this year.

He said the regional office may allocate funds for the fire truck early next year.

The 2,000-liter Ford fire truck is about 40 years in service, Eduhoso said. "If that age, we can expect a truck or any vehicle to be eating funds for maintenance," he said.

Mimos, a second-class municipality (annual income: P45 million) has a population of over 70,000 in 43 villages. If the BFP rule on one fire truck for every 40,000 people is strictly followed, officials said the town should have at least two trucks.

Envisioned to be the "Tanawan of the South," the town is hoping that the construction of a new highway connecting the Subic-Clark-Tarlac Expressway to Aurora via Nueva Ecija would spur economic development.

Eduhoso said he was thankful that firemen here had not responded to a fire since the fire truck broke down in September. The latest fire in town occurred in May, he said.

"The cool weather here is our inherent advantage," he added.

In case of fire during the Christmas and New Year holidays, he said local firemen's would seek help from fire stations in Quezon and Zaragoza towns some 8-13 kilometers away.

Eduhoso called on residents to take all precautions and avoid activities that might cause fire.

Fire guts houses in flooded village in Cagayan de Oro

CAGAYAN DE ORO CITY—The houses of the Sarifudis and Mendis families here were razed when the swirling floods hit they did not stand a chance against a fire that broke on Tuesday evening.

Chief Insp. Cenaco Tellmo, officer in charge of the Cagayan de Oro Fire Department, said investigators were still trying to determine what had triggered the fire that gutted the houses of Abdul Gafur Sarifudis and his neighbor Petra Mamalia in Villa Angela in Barangay Bulua.

Abdullah Yahir, a neighbor of the two fire victims, said they were clearing their houses of mud and debris on Tuesday evening when the fire started in the house of Sarifudis.

Sarifudis had not returned to his house since Saturday's devastating deluge and Mamalia was at Eat Cagayan public market, some 15 kilometers away, to buy food.

No one was inside the houses when the fire broke out, he said.

Tellmo said the city's fire department had quickly responded to the fire that broke but the engines were slowed down by mud that covered the road.

Yahir said they could not do anything to save the houses as there was still no water in the subdivision. Some days after the floods cut off supply.

"The fire quickly spread to Mamalia's house since there was no water to use to stop the fire," he said. Bobby Lagsa and Ryan Rosauro, Inquirer Mindanao

Health workers go to Unicef over harassment

THESE PUGAD subanhillon sa in Hangdaan town are beneficiaries of the Cordillera's most outstanding nutrition program. Hugot's nutrition projects were recognized on Mon. 29 by the government's regional nutrition program.

BAUKO CITY—Cordillera health workers have complained to the United Nations Children's Fund (Unicef) about being harassed allegedly by military men in the course of their volunteer work in the mountain villages.

Mia Bandian, executive director of the Community Health Education, Services and Training in the Cordillera Region (Chestercor), sent to the Unicef on Dec. 12 a set of documents about workers being chilled and threatened through text messages. They claimed these were connected by military men.

"We have asked Unicef to issue a decision from Leipzig the Philippine government] to protect health workers in the Ifugao villages which could not be reached by government services," she said.

The Commission on Human Rights (CHR) dismissed Chestercor's complaint against the Armed Forces of the Philippines on Nov. 3 after it found no direct evidence to link the military to the threats sent through text messages, said lawyer Harold Rob-ason, CHR acting Cordillera director.

Chestercor's complaint was filed in March.

"The threats were not enough, but we counted on legal to build the AFP accountable yet. Not with this kind of evidence," Rob-ayon said.

The CHR has been coordinating with the National Telecommunications Commission to help track down the source of the text messages, he said, adding that "although it would not lead us to actual people if the mobile cp used has not been registered."

Bandian said they urged the Unicef to seek immediate action from the Philippine government because CHR's actions may have endangered the workers. "By dismissing the harassment case ... we will be open targets of more harassment and death threats," she said.

Chestercor accused members of the Army's 21st Infantry Battalion in Ifugao of harassing health workers who organized training workshops in the Kalinga farming villages of Lubuagan and Pinukpuk towns from 2007 to 2011.

Three Chestercor workers—Bendiktin Ilayam, Cynthia Sacnasa and Milagros Aquino—reported receiving messages on their mobile telephones that identified them as communist rebels "who should be buried six feet under," the group said.

"We have been intimidated and harassed ... for the CHR did not recognize the merits of our case, limiting the documents as papers that were timid in court," a Chestercor statement said.

"How can we begin the investigation? By investigating the units AFP," Rob-ayon asked. "We do not have the manner power to demand (telephone service providers to name the calls); but we will still coordinate with them. The complainants did not specify any individual [who may be charged di-rectly with the threats]," he said. Desiree Caluza with a report from Vincent Cabreza, Inquirer Northern Luzon

Calapan villagers sandbag river to prevent floods

By Madonna Virola, Inquirer Southern Luzon

CITY OF CALAPAN—Instead of partying this Christmas, about 150 residents of Barangay Tawid here, led by their officials, decided to use their time to sandbag the portion of Bu-ayang-Bisigan River that has threatened to overflow and create a new waterway leading to the populated area in the village.

City Councilor Edel Ilano, who took part in the activity, said the volunteers have been sandbagging daily since Monday "like an outing in the field," to make the task easier.

Positioned along a 100-meter stretch between Sitio Bagong Nork of Dulad and Sitio H of Barangay Camansihan, the sandbags, using jusay sacks, were 1 meter high and between 1.5 and 2.5 meters wide, Ilano said.

The villagers, who largely depend on their vegetable and rice fields, have been losing income because of the seasonally heavy rains and floods experienced over the last three months, said Dulad Barangay Captain Francisco Tinio.

"The villagers are united, their officials utilized the calamity funds, and started sandbagging on Dec. 19. After Tropical Storm 'Sendong' devastated Iloro in Cagayan de Oro and Bigan, they are more convinced they are doing the right thing," said Ilano.

More than 2,500 sandbags have so far been put in place, he added.

"After these four, we target to sandbag another 100 meters stretch, and would need 3,000 more sacks," he said.

He said Mayor Bonifacio Salvador "Tiny" Leviste has programmed to use next year's budget the cost of re-channeling the river's course in Sitio Bagong Pook, as long as it is solution.

In 2008, Leviste, during the city administration, mobilized 35,000 volunteers to make sandbags and construct a canal dike along the river banks, after the city was hit by seven floodings.

More than half a million bags were produced and almost a kilometer of canal dike was constructed.

The initiative has brought Leviste to Asia Society's ninth annual Asia 21 Young Leaders summit in New Delhi, India, from Nov. 18 to 26 said Abigail Pangsing, the city's media coordinator.

"Not only did it save the city from flood, source, but it also saved P62 million worth of reconstruction, which only took 10 days of rebuilding instead of two years," she said.

Village exec shot dead in Masbate

MASBATE CITY—Another murder took place in Masbate just eight days before Christmas.

Victor Roberto dela Pisa, 54, a councilor of Barangay Mariles sul in Placer town, was shot dead in front of his wife by three still unidentified gunmen at dinner noon on Dec. 16, said Insp. Joseph Millares, Placer police chief.

Millares said Dela Pisa and his wife were traversing a secluded, hilly portion of a dirt road in Mariles sul aboard a motorcycle when they were attacked.

The gunmen asked the councilor and his wife to get off. Then they shot the town official on different parts of his body, causing his death. But they spared his wife, Millares said.

The motive for the killing is yet to be determined by police investigators.

Placer Mayor Joshua Judd Lacuna, however, said politics was behind the murder. He declined to elaborate.

The shooting incident came just seven days after a man was shot dead while transacting inside a pawnshop in Mandaue City.

Ismael Belancos, 55, of Barangay Poblacion in Catmon town, Masbate, was filling out a customer information sheet inside a branch of M. Giraffes when he was attacked by a gunman armed with a .45 cal. pistol at about 7:20 a.m., said Senior Insp. Norlando Obispo, acting police director of Masbate.

Belancos suffered a bullet wound in the head, which killed him on the spot. Jonas Cerbito-Soltes, Inquirer Southern Luzon

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PHILIPPINE DAILY INQUIRER

OPINION

Uncertain future

EDITORIAL

A FEW days after the death of Kim Jong-il last December, the state-controlled North Korean media reported that millions of grieving citizens had turned out to mourn his passing. Agence France Presse reported North Korean TV showing images of mourners weeping before portraits of their dead leader, "their bodies shaking with seemingly unbearable grief."

If indeed most North Koreans are in mourning, it seems that they remain alone. Outside of North Korea itself, even such public demonstrations of grief are being seen as little more than the usual propaganda being mounted by the government-controlled media which has helped promote a personality cult around the "Dear Leader." Elsewhere in the world the news of Kim's death was met with cautious relief more than genuine grief, with world leaders dispensing with their ritual expressions of condolence to his people.

Those continuing reactions to Kim's death are as much as the contrast between the myth and the reality of his regime. In announcing his death, a teary-eyed broadcaster perpetuated the myth of a tireless leader who brought his country to modernity, saying: "He worked day and night for socialist reconstruction and the happiness of people, for the union of country and modernization." The reality is that Kim was a rapacious dictator, womanizing and ruthless despot who starved his own people while turning his country into a nuclear power and used the earliest threats to terrorize South Korea and the international community. How poorly he served his people is probably best demonstrated by the fact that North Korea's 24.2 million people have to struggle to survive on a per capita gross domestic product of $1,087, even as South Korea's 48.9 million people enjoy a GDP of $20,746. Happiness and modernization, which South Koreans now enjoy, are things that North Koreans can only dream about.

Kim has left his country not only poor but also having an uncertain future. His chosen successor, Kim Jong-Un, is young not only in years at 28 but also in the art of politics and governance. His strongest credential is being the son of his father. And so North Korea's dynastic politics, thus apparently is all that matters.

Kim Jong-il tried to prepare his son for succession by appointing him as a four-star general two years ago although he had never served in the military. The late leader had also placed a sister and her husband in positions that would ease the transition. But whether the "Great Successor" has succeeded in consolidating his power base remains uncertain. An expert on North Korea, however, has ruled out a military coup, saying military commanders are unlikely to entrust war because the whole state was founded on the continuity of the Kim dynasty.

But even a stable North Korean leadership can't be very encouraging to an international community that has been hoping their regime change would give their country a chance not only to rebuild its economy but also to help provide some stability in the Korean Peninsula and East Asia. Kim Jong-Un is an unknown quantity. He could act like his father's son and continue to squander his country's resources in building a formidable nuclear arsenal, or he can cut strike out on a different path by abandoning his father's nuclear program, ending his country's isolation and starting its march out of poverty.

The world will be watching with bated breath in what direction he will lead his country.

Stop illegal loggers and charcoal-makers

AS I SEE IT

Neal H. Cruz

PICTURES DON'T LIE. Pictures of the flood devastated areas in Zaragoza de Oro and Bigaa show many cuttings scattered on the riverbed. The logs were washed down the mountains by the torrents of water. Most likely, they washed into the houses, causing the houses to collapse and get carried away by the floodwaters.

That can only mean that illegal logging was going on in the forests because legal logging has been phased out.

And this is what is happening to our forests everywhere. First, the logging concessions were done in, build roads through the forests and didn't cutting the trees. After they leave, the illegal loggers come in, cutting the immature trees left standing. They leave the logs where they were cut to dry, then come back later to saw them into lumber. That is an easier detection. Up there in the forests, they cannot be seen cutting up the logs. Back down the logs washed down by the raging torrents, the logs that destroyed the houses.

After the illegal loggers carry the charcoalmakers take out even the saplings and burn them into charcoal. Thus, no new trees are left to hold the soil together when it rains. The rain, rolling water catches the soil down the mountainsides. With each rain, more and more soil is carried away until only bare rock is left. Then, the trees inches down never restored.

Meanwhile, the mud carried down by the water is deposited in the bottom of the river, where it builds up the riverbeds and starts to hold less water. Thus, the rivers overflow their banks faster and flood the surrounding areas.

Unless illegal logging and charcoal-making are stopped completely, there will be more and more floods and landslides. It would be only where will the construction industry get its lumber? There is a big demand for lumber and the illegal loggers supply some of it.

First, the construction industry must learn to use less wood and more available steel. Philippine construction is very wasteful of wood, a throwback to the time when we still had plenty of wood in the forests.

Even lumber, or the scaffolding used in the construction of reinforced houses, is wasted also. They are simply cut into firewood after the house is finished. Some contractors use sturdy, strong reusable steel scaffoldings but the smaller ones still waste a lot of wood. Cost factors from overuse limit use fillings some of the demand.

But at the time we are cutting down overmature trees, all these overmature plants in the world room for a new, just like our forests. As builders should however use less wood.

Second, we should be allowed to import wood for the finishing touches like flooring, walls, doors, cabinet moulding and furniture. But that means the owners of wood-exporting countries would be displeased and that would harm global warming and climate change.

The furniture and woodcraft industries are already running out of wood. Any soon, our furniture-making industry would become extinct—just like the cotton furniture industry already has become (as one of 1970s—when its export boomed. But that would only be transferring the problem to another country, a problem, by the way, that would have no less repercussions on the whole world.

Worse, our sculptures and woodcraft are also running out of wood. Ask the sculptors in Paete, Laguna, and they will tell you that it is also becoming more difficult to procure pieces of wood to use in their craft.

And then where will you get the charcoal to feed the voracious appetite of all the charcoal restaurants and sidewalk barbecue stands? The big demand for charcoal for the various resorts people in the countryside have turned to charcoal-making.

But we already have the technology to make charcoal out of agricultural wastes. Palay husks, coconut coir, coco shells, hay, sugar and kaldol, sawdust, sugarcane stalks, corncobs, twigs and leaves, even grass and weeds can all be compressed into charcoal briquettes. The only reason entrepreneurs is already cutting and selling these charcoal bricks. The trouble is he owns the patent for the technology and machine.

So why does not the Department of Science and Technology buy the patent from him and propagate the making of charcoal? This will give more income to the farmers and other people in the countryside. At the same time, it will continue to supply all the fuel—flour and lumber our needs with charcoal. It is also an export product. Do you know that Singapore imports plenty of charcoal?

Our agriculture is very wasteful. Many agricultural byproducts like palay husks and coconut coir are just thrown away or burned when they can even more income for the farmers. Our palay wastage is the second worst from millions of rice-consuming countries. Thousands of tons is just thrown away when it could be turned into charcoal and even wine.

When President Aquino came home from the United States sometime ago, he raved about the kid for coconut water there. Coconut water is supposed to be a health drink. A local company is already producing and selling coconut water in plastic packs. It costs more than the ordinary soft drink but is better tasting and more healthful. If they raved about the kilograms of clothes we can carry if we export young coconuts or coconut water to the United States.

The trouble is when we pick the young buko for export, then would be no mature coconuts left to be made into copra. But the coconut water in the buko is the same as the water in the mature coconuts which are just thrown away when making copra. Why not sell this coco water instead and make the coco farmers earn more?

War is over

FOREIGN COMMENT

AFTER ALMOST nine years, the war in Iraq is officially over, at least for American troops. For Iraqis, the departure of one military force is both welcome and nerve-rending. The country has been freed from the brutality of Saddam Hussein, but its security infrastructure remains weak and its nascent democracy is susceptible to assault by both external and domestic threats.

It's not a perfect departure, given the uncertainties long faced. In the end, this was a war that didn't need to be fought. Saddam Hussein had nothing to do with the June 11, 2001, terror attacks, in which, shockingly, the terrorists took place. Despite the belief of the Bush administration and much of Congress, there were no weapons of mass destruction.

The outcome of the Iraq war may not become clear for years or even decades. But here's what is indisputable. The war is over and American troops are on their way home, where they belong.

Debra Saunders-Hastings

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Occupy today's pre-occupied Christmas

PASSION FOR REASON

Raul C. Pangalangan

CHRISTMAS SEASON in the biggest foreign economy in the calendar, the acquired craft for universal altruism, the discovered of greed, the only holiday season of very many Filipino. Peace on earth, goodwill to all. Wouldn't the spirit of the Occupy movement demand upon Claus-mas revolt? In Manila? I seriously doubt so.

During the Christmas Masses, we could hear Jesus' birth in a manger, but before and after (probably, even during Mass, our souls pretty get fixated on. In fact, I've come across rich people's interviews where they speak of favorite stores with names so exclusive I'd never heard of them before. Blokes one had better be embarrassing for parents of Christian children. If it's the 12th month per se its equivalent for those too rich to be locked into fixed calories.

"Pretend-ritic awakening"? Again, I'm not so sure. The Occupiers speak of political dynamics to explain inequality, but before and after (probably, even during Mass, we really

The secrets of Taj Mahal

ANALYSIS

Amanda Ibarrondo

[illegible] agra, India—Agra, once the capital of the Mughal Empire during the 16th and early 17th centuries, is one and a half hours by express train from New Delhi. Around 13,000 tourists visit Agra not to see the ruins of the red sandstone fortresses built by the Mughal emperors, but to make a pilgrimage to Taj Mahal, India's most famous and delightful wonder, to stand where magnificent temples and edifices dotted its ornate riverfront three hundred years ago, and to marvel at the fact that so few architectural remnants of a country that is slowly but surely falling apart into an industrialized country.

Taj Mahal's majesty can be seen from every vantage point: its surroundings are overcrowded with people, including beggars, and ancient cows wander unmolested on polluted lots. But at the end of the journey, as long as one does not look for the comfort of the fluorescent-neon, a sense of awe prevails.

The personal passion of Taj Mahal does not subsequently survive the legend, the poetry and the intrigue that shroud what the Indian guide Rabindranath Tagore calls "a teardrop on the cheek of time." Taj Mahal is not the only Mughal edifice—and is not the most well preserved and architecturally beautiful mark in the world. It is best described by the English poet, Sir Edwin Arnold, as "like a poem of architecture, in white buildings set, for the most part, in a garden of cypress and flowering trees." It is a celebration of unmatched faith in mortal love and that's the way to appreciate it.

Taj Mahal stands on the bank of River Yamuna, which [illegible] and is a wide ancient undertaking the Great Red Fort of Agra, the citadel of the Mughal emperors until they moved their capital to Delhi in 1637. It was built by the fifth Mughal emperor Shah Jahan (ruled, in 1628, in memory of his second wife, Mumtaz Mahal, a Muslim Persian princess. The third wife is what accompanies her husband in death as per in a campaign to crush a rebellion after giving birth to their 14th child. The death so rendered the emperor that all his hair and beard were said to have given their diplomatic turn to, at the very least, the thoughtfulness of the gesture.

One presidents' gift and receive many gifts throughout their time in office, but the tradition of the "Gifts of State," that are increasing because these offers are the best, the rarest, the most valuable. Many items gifted received by our presidents are displayed in memorabilia to their museums or homes. Many are left in Mishandling and put in storage. Some of the things that are left behind are up to Mishandling are paintings and sculptures, mostly portraits, photographs, books with notes inscribed by authors, coins, medals and decorations. Some are of historic value—from original maps and manuscripts to relics like the Bible used for his oath of office by Abraham Lincoln and the first Philippine flag in 1898. No display are gifts received by presidents, but the gifts presented by them to visiting heads of states and assorted VIPs are not on display. Historians will have to go through fellow inventories and GSA reports to find out what gifts they got and why.

In our modern [illegible] have come to view celebrations to Gifts of State and some their worst of a personal nature. For example, US President Gerald Ford sent Ferdinand Marcos an avid golfer, personal, and golf balls.

[illegible] Ford was remembering in the University of Michigan (where Sen. Miriam Defensor-Santiago graduated from) I was told that Marcos was considered an honorary doctorate in 1966. Two other Philippine students honored were Imelda Romualdez Marcos, whose thesis needs have been ignored for so long, and those who have been somewhat to some had forsaken land, may even have a better shot at receiving. They're the ones used to improvising or to making do, to using material and equipment—it looks like the test may be much living the way they've been living and thinking all their lives. but what human-created culture?

In Emergency Research Center Inc., an emergency [illegible] Foundation, Inc. and the late Ferdinand Peppet (for new term for 'survivalist') until the latest birth and whether who will using it through a long-term disaster. It's the third disaster who lives on survival mode on a daily basis. It's the person with the longest packing through the garbage and cooking with the [illegible] and [illegible] for ages. It's the street kids who are used to the environment. They know where the best garbage are, where to find water, how to prepare what food they forage. They live without most of the things we take for granted, what for granted, but, no bathroom, no water, no closet full of clothes, no laptop, no music, [illegible] no electricity.

* * *

CERTAINLY isn't taught us to make money while

As you read this, you will have probably be in the [illegible] your [illegible] and Christmas day preparations—even if you are a survivor of breaking and just getting the film packages of your relief goods bag for an impromptu Santa Barosa.

But even for families who are better off, the threat of the eventual celebration would have been dulled somewhat by thoughts of the loss for many and of the horrendous death toll in North, are Mindanao and elsewhere. And [illegible] about to [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] a struggle to the scale of human suffering we have just witnessed.

Perth heading then is the call of [illegible] mental groups for a "simple" Christmas, one devoid of [illegible] trappings and lavish gift-giving. Perhaps [illegible] the Christmas [illegible] we can all be more [illegible] family, fellowship and faith.

Gifts

LOOKING BACK

Arnberto B. Ocampo

[illegible] I never today's column I thought that the expression "Don't look a gift horse in the mouth" was in reference to the Trojan horse and to the saying, "Beware of Greeks bearing gifts." In high school we learned about Greek gods and goddesses who had many powers complicated but because they had many powers, they were also at times somehow bestowed that one launched a thousand ships into war. Then there was the wooden horse.

After a decade of unsuccessful siege, the Greeks built a wooden horse, filled it with their best warriors, left it in front of the Trojan city or Troy and sailed away. The Trojans, thinking they were gone, pulled the gift horse into the city and celebrated the departure of the enemy. That night the Greeks came out of the horse and opened the gates for their comrades waiting outside, and thus ended the Trojan war. Looking a gift horse in the mouth is one way to ascertain if one can trust its motives like a car's front or teeth. This new impetus had the saying was a reminder to take all gifts, big and small, with gratitude.

In the time this column was print most gifts would be waiting under the Christmas tree in many homes the world over. That was why I decided to let my little boy giving sorts my name books and taking the trouble to find gifts only for immediate family and the favorite nephew who expects a wrapped gift. Finding the right gift needs a lot of challenge, and I am glad most of us only have to go through this once a year. Christmas. Depending on the budget, and how much we can afford to spend for the single individual present in the elaborate individuals, and the effort we put into this to find a fraction of the boundless facing the personal and social needs of [illegible] prime examples and events, who must go through the here and there. Don't [illegible] the [illegible] are reminded of the overlooked items depicted in the Midnighting treasure, the various gifts received by each of our presidents since Emilio Aguinaldo. These gifts display

Focusing on the essentials

AT LARGE

Rina Jimenez-David

JUDGING FROM TV coverage of the aftermath of Storm "Sendong," much of the relief work being carried out in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan—the two biggest cities affected by the floods and mudslides—is being done by the private sector. More specifically, by the TV networks reporting on the disaster. Notice that coverage of relief efforts focuses on the fund-raising, collection and distribution of water, food and other goods managed by the networks. Even the [illegible] are being overshadowed by them. It's as if [illegible] is carried out by other entities—other corporations, NGOs, colleges and universities, individuals and especially by the government—doesn't exist, or if it does, the impression is that they are there only to get in the way of the [illegible] efforts.

Blame [illegible] on national government efforts are centered on all, it's to focus on the immediate problems. Newscasts focus on the evacuation centers, many of them hopelessly overcrowded, to discuss the dire straits of the victims, to interview survivors and traffic rules that put up with the congestion in schools or gyms.

I'm not saying that media should stop reporting on the problems that are the most hit by the disaster. There are certainly more than enough difficulties that need to be addressed, from the shortage of supplies, and certainly urgent concerns such as finding solutions must be found immediately. But wouldn't a little balance help? Doesn't the public deserve to get a fuller, more accurate picture?

Reports [illegible] through [illegible] and in-depth analyses of the [illegible] responsibility for [illegible] of all sides. But will the domestic coverage help the victims see more than water, responsible [illegible] would?

* * *

If things like these, you can't help but turn to a book. Authors book that was sent to me months ago and which has become, oddly enough, a treasure to our bathroom reading shelf. Nothing like a disaster preparedness handbook to help you while away those moments, I guess.

The book has a stark title—Your Emergency Survival Handbook,' with the subtitle "A Must-

have for Every Member of Your Family." It was written and edited by researched and compiled, as the preface[illegible] by Paloma, a accounting [illegible] and living [illegible] who [illegible] admits that readers may be wondering what qualifications she has to write a preparedness book. But she has been gathering information on coming disasters, and ways to prepare for and survive them. For years now, she says, prompted by certain signs ("planetary alignments") that [illegible] other [illegible].

After "Ondoy" struck her house, Paloma says she was prompted to put together all the materials she was able to gather into a simple, concise book with practical tips on how to mitigate the effects of disasters, what emergency kits and backpacks to prepare, and what it is important to sit down with your family and make contingency plans.

Such plans, Paloma says, are particularly important for the [illegible] and confused-able among us, who tend to take the comforts of life for granted and are indecisive and unable to the impact of disaster that's those worse off than us.

* * *

THIS is what Paloma hopes to see on the computers in the aftermath of the rich and middle class: to see that poor.

"[illegible] more we know, the calmer and smarter about disaster management we can be, and even if the same kind of as usual [illegible] we can be as quite sure things [illegible] as this could [illegible] will the family can be more [illegible] about [illegible] are. Quite frankly, the truly unprepared among

us, whose basic needs have been ignored for so long, and those who have themselves to some bad decisions [illegible] may even have a better shot at surviving. They're the ones used to improvising or to making do, to using material and equipment—it looks like the test may be much living the way they've been living and thinking all their lives. but what human-created culture?

In Emergency Research Center Inc., an emergency [illegible] Foundation, Inc. and the late Ferdinand Peppet (for new term for 'survivalist') until the latest birth and whether who will using it through a long-term disaster. It's the third disaster who lives on survival mode on a daily basis. It's the person with the longest packing through the garbage and cooking with the [illegible] and [illegible] for ages. It's the street kids who are used to the environment. They know where the best garbage are, where to find water, how to prepare what food they forage. They live without most of the things we take for granted, what for granted, but, no bathroom, no water, no closet full of clothes, no laptop, no music, [illegible] no electricity.

* * *

CERTAINLY isn't taught us to make money while

As you read this, you will have probably be in the [illegible] your [illegible] and Christmas day preparations—even if you are a survivor of breaking and just getting the film packages of your relief goods bag for an impromptu Santa Barosa.

But even for families who are better off, the threat of the eventual celebration would have been dulled somewhat by thoughts of the loss for many and of the horrendous death toll in North, are Mindanao and elsewhere. And [illegible] about to [illegible] the [illegible] and [illegible] a struggle to the scale of human suffering we have just witnessed.

Perth heading then is the call of [illegible] mental groups for a "simple" Christmas, one devoid of [illegible] trappings and lavish gift-giving. Perhaps [illegible] the Christmas [illegible] we can all be more [illegible] family, fellowship and faith.

Christians

PINOY KASI

Michael L. Tan

THERE ARE now about 2.18 billion Christians, about a third of the total global population. The figure comes from an American organization, the Pew Research Center's Forum on Religion and Public Life, in a report, "Global Christianity: A Report on the Size and Distribution of the World's Christian Population." (To be perfectly [illegible] exact.)

Last year, Pew released a report on global Islam, and we noted then that [illegible] about 1.6 Muslims, so Christianity is still the world's largest religion.

There's nothing Christianity's lead over Islam [illegible] religion. The reality is that Christianity is actually quite diverse in terms of beliefs and practices. The first report in fact breaks down its statistics into "Catholic," "Protestant," "Orthodox" and "Other Christian"—and each category also has many diverse groups as well.

"Global Christianity" is full of surprising facts and figures, challenging many of the assumptions we have about Christianity. The Pew report notes that the Middle East-Northern African region, where Christ and the first Christians lived, is now Christian with the smallest number of Christians, both in absolute numbers and as a percentage of the total population.

The same night I was reading the Pew Report I came across an article in the New York Times about Dora Barrigos, a very accomplished city official who retired from the third country [illegible], into the third century A.D., in what is Syria today. Archaeologists have dug up evidence to show it had people from all over the world, including Africa. They found in the building, which looked like a residence from the outside, actually housed a early Christian church with paintings showing Jesus performing miracles and women in a baptismal font.

Christianity had to be preached in such remote locations if not [illegible] the Roman Empire for the first centuries after Christ. After the Roman emperor's Constantine embraced the religion, it spread throughout Europe, which was to remain so [illegible] until the 20th century. The growth was not without problems, with divisions between Roman Catholicism and eastern Orthodox Catholicism. In the 16th century there were the Reformation and the rise of Protestantism, which today has many different denominations.

Catholicism arrived in South America through Spanish and Portuguese colonizers, while North America received Catholic and Protestant settlers from Europe, including smaller Christian groups that were persecuted. The United States today gave rise to what the Pew Report classifies as "other Christians," groups like the Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints (Mormons) and Jehovah's Witnesses.

The Pew Report notes that a century ago, two-thirds of Christians were to be found in Europe, making it a mainly "western" religion and associated with the colonizing powers. Today 61 percent of the world's Christians are found in the "global south" (Latin America, Asia and Africa), where the practice of Christianity can be much more conservative than in western countries.

Only Christian country in Asia?

The Pew Report should make us rethink our characterizing the "only Christian country in Asia." Yes, we rank fifth in the world with 86 million Catholics, but Indonesia has 28 million Catholics and yes, we have the most number of Christians in Asia with 86.7 million. But Christians in China number 67 million, many in the early tradition of underground house churches. India has 31.8 million Christians and Indonesia, 21.4 million. And while Papua New Guinea has only 6.8 and Timor-Leste, 1.1 million Christians, they have the highest percentage of Christians in Asia. The Pew Report estimates Christians represent about 93 percent of our total population or if you want to play the numbers game, Papua New Guinea is a "more" Christian nation than we are.

The Pew Report noted that 31 percent of Filipino Christians are members of charismatic Pew defines them as [illegible] Catholics, who are usually Protestant, are those which believe in a baptism of the Holy Spirit with post-conversion religious experience like healing, speaking in tongues, while other [illegible] Christians are defined as those who are "non-pentecostal" but believe in a renewal of inner faith through [illegible] and personal devotion. Iglesia ni Cristo, the Seventh-day Adventists and the Pew report cites Bible Senator-Ely Pilapil as as an example, with charge of drawing.

The Pew Report's section on the Philippines needs to be corrected though. In their discussion of Protestant churches, the Pew Report names the Church of Christ (Manolo), Jesus is Lord Church (Eddie Villanueva) and the Church of Christ (Restoration) to a term used by the enemies of the Iglesia as Cristo (INC), similar to the way Muslims used to be called Mohammedans.

The Pew Report mentions the INC again, this time as under "Other Christians," grouped together with the Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses with a total of about 450,000. I thought that estimate was way too low since the INC alone should have at least a million members. Unfortunately, the INC itself does not release official figures, so it's hard to say when the real situation is.

I have some readers are probably reacting now to the INC being classified as Christian. The INC denies Christ's divinity but [illegible] Christ was real human. I was asked a grade, she class of mine if they thought of the INC as Christian. The class was on the anthropology of religion and had as members Catholic priests, a Protestant pastor and an INC keynote. One of the Catholic priests was quick to answer, "They follow Christ so they are Christians as far as I am concerned." It was a great lesson in [illegible] and how the hatred or changes Christian groups have with each other are tolerance and the hatred was Christ and the Bible.

Beyond the numbers, I'd like to see studies on how Filipinos look at Christianity, as an institution, and as personal faith.

I'd say we are devoid give up the ruling many to about the Philippines being the only Christian country in Asia. We make that claim whenever we want to show ourselves to be morally superior or paradoxically, when we're thoroughly ashamed of our corruption and our failings, and want to call for mass transformation. Ultimately, our "salvation" just might come about as Filipinos, now found all over the world, begin to understand a more catholic (in the sense of universal) Christianity.

Low-income gifts

Two days for last-minute gifts. Philippine Educational Theater Association (Pitaa) has a P300 desk calendar for its new issue Dulo-ode Bagay to Artistry Jones for Children's project, with [illegible] and Rhoda Trinidad. Other calendars are available from their office at 3 Bernard Street at the back of Quezon City Sports Club.

The Ortigas Foundation has desk calendars too, as well as postcard sets showing vintage photographs of Manila. In addition, they are selling, in advance, Fr. Benn Arellano's "La Casa del Rosario: The Legacy of Hispanic Rosaries Churches in the Philippines." The book will be on sale for [illegible] from next the end of the month at Vera Hotel's ground floor or the Greenhills Shopping Center.

* * *

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Ordained by Charter

LETTERS

THE PHILIPPINE Bar Association (PBA) has always stood by its guiding principle—the Rule of Law.

The public exchange between co-equal branches of government may be discussed as part and parcel of a vibrant—if at times raucous—democracy. Nonetheless, it is unfortunate that this has come to pass. We, as the end-beneficiaries, have certain proper mechanisms for the resolution of these disputes under the Rule of Law.

On this premise, the PBA views the impeachment proceedings commenced against Chief Justice Renato Corona as the constitutionally ordained process which epitomizes the Rule of Law at work. It will allow the issues to be properly ventilated in sober and orderly proceedings where guilt or innocence is weighed and determined on clear merit and not on the basis of an open competition in public opinion.

Chief Justice Corona is entitled to defend himself in the appropriate forum which he trusts he accorded the respect due his high office. Let all accusations be ventilated and heard in this constitutional process, and let this process not be undermined by out-court tri.

In keeping with our cherished traditions, the PBA will exhaust vigilance in ensuring that the Rule of Law will prevail over clamor who cannot seek to undermine it.

—DONALD D. LIM (DOL), president,
Philippine Bar Association

If you have any complaints, grievances or suggestions about the treatment of news and pieces by the Inquirer, you may write to the Readers' Advocate, Philippine Daily Inquirer, Chino Roces Avenue, corner Pasig and Makati Streets, City of Makati or send a fax to 896-807-3703, 897-3703.

All texts of letters to the editor are requested to include their complete address and telephone or pager number or e-mail address for verification purposes. The Inquirer will not publish any letter unless such information is supplied.

'Special gift' spotlights neglect of retirees

PRESIDENT AQUINO has approved an extra Christmas bonus for government employees, this aside from the 13th-month pay. It certainly is good tidings for them and their families. But the President has temporarily relieved a more needy and even more deserving sector of our society—the senior citizens.

Since the administration of Pres. Fidel Ver to the present, there has been a series of salary adjustments for public employees. But no increase has been given to the senior citizens' pension. One student needs to think that retirees and senior citizens have no income and their usefulness. Its duty can now be ignored and forgotten.

My appeal to the President: Do not give senior citizens the feeling that you and your administration also do not care for senior citizens.

The previous administrations called the veterans Filipino warriors on country's modern-day heroes. But if these are heroes, it is to who reward, who did not learn, who did not risk many things to challenges, who should be called heroes.

Despite the fact that we were deprived because of an unfair national policy and law, we did not take the law into our hands. We remain loyal and dedicated citizens. Despite the shortcomings, inadequacies and frustrations of our bodies, we believed, respected and upheld the rule of law.

Sec. 4 (b) of the Expanded Senior Citizens Act of 2010 (Republic Act 9257) specifically states: "extraordinary benefits of retirees from both the government and the private sector shall be regularly reviewed to commensurate with increasing responsiveness and consistent-

ing and to the extent practicable and feasible, shall be upgraded to be on par with the current scale enjoyed by those in-service retirees."

At present, the basic monthly salary of a public administrator retired teacher is P18,000. This December they get to receive their 13th month pay of P18,000, plus the additional gift of P10,000.

Now where the frail, retired school teachers who are 70 years old and over? There are those who receive less than P1,000 a month. Those in the town: bingo, like barangay, clerks and laborers, receive P1,000 or less. Among our GSIS pensioners, this range of pension is common.

This narrative inquiry demands immediate action and explanation from grave mendation for the men and women who had invested the best years of their lives for our beloved country. Let them save down and talk with them in the GSIS and SSS regional offices in Cebu City where they have to submit their letters to the requirements of those offices so they can receive their measly pensions. Some come in wheelchairs or are carried or physically supported by relatives and bedridden friends. Some live with people who are not themselves well.

It is not right, just or fair that more elite and wealthy citizens enjoy so much while weak, frail senior citizens who dedicated their lives to public service are neglected and left to suffer in poverty.

—JOSE R. GONZI,
president and chairman
of the board of trustees,
Soil and Water Conservation
Foundation Inc.
ese.1.edu@yahoo.com.ph

Pushing matters to breaking point

WHEN JUSTICE Secretary Leila de Lima decided not to honor the temporary restraining order (TRO) issued by the Supreme Court, memories of those who cheered the boldness of her action. I thought it interesting that she used it to postpone the new hire for hands, but I strongly felt there was called for.

But to impeach Chief Justice Renato Corona for just doing his job? It is pushing matters to a breaking point. We to summon the super agents of the impeachment process, which just showed that the rules was purely political and grossly malicious.

The vote the majority of the 10-person agency with the House of Representatives on this issue, for that doesn't mean the House did right. Members don't determine what is right and just. I don't agree that Corona had lost or stay in office, he should have stepped down from his post. But no impeach him for deciding cases on their the merits before the Supreme Court interpreter... and lack of understanding of the real nature of our country's laws.

It may be good for now that confidence of power would wane likely be favorable to the Filipinos. But the end can never justify the means. The Chief Justice is not the only one who can save the country. What it doesn't favor us, it does not give us the right to gang up and bully to hand who is just doing his job.

—MICHAEL E. ANTOLAK,
chrell@yahoo.com

Lopez group's loans: an attempt to divert heat from Ongpin

THE MPC 14 column of Neal G. Cruz saddled the supposed "solutions" of the late than allows banks to write off bad debts. Cruz was particularly talking to the 2006 write-offs made by the Development Bank of the Philippines (DBP) on the equity and investment loans of Lopez holdings.

Although Cruz was saying that his columns were not meant to divert public attention from the Roberto Ongpin loan, the fact that he was capitalizing misleading data he himself claimed to be legal made me believe that he was allowing himself to be used in a legal tussle to really direct the issue of the DBP loan away from Ongpin.

When the Special Purpose Vehicle (SPV) Law allows banks to write-debts, clearly there is nothing to debate about the write-off. It's already a law that probably had undergone several debates. I think Cruz should look at questionable dealings of the DBP with Ongpin. The fact remains that these accounts to become nonperforming in the P120 million and P160 million loans extended by the SBF to Ongpin's Delta Motors Sales Corp., the sale of Philex mining shares and the excess disclosure made by Sen. Serge Osmeña about the P69 million loan secured again by the DBP to Ongpin's Global Air Services Inc. in 2006 were in the absence of a loan application.

There are the legislative issues that should be the subject of any debate especially considering that there are questions about violations of the Republic Act No. 3019 (Anti-Graft and Corrupt Practices Act) and the Corporation Code. Cruz should look at questionable dealings of the DBP with Ongpin. The fact remains that these accounts to become nonperforming in the P120 million and P160 million loans extended by the SBF to Ongpin's Delta Motors Sales Corp., the sale of Philex mining shares and the excess disclosure made by Sen. Serge Osmeña about the P69 million loan secured again by the DBP to Ongpin's Global Air Services Inc. in 2006 were in the absence of a loan application.

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Reward eyed for info on 'The Butcher'

From page A1

dicial killings and forced disappearances.

The decision on whether the offer of reward money would be warranted "really depends on the developments in the next 48 hours," De Lima told reporters in an ambush interview.

"I'm keeping my fingers crossed. I am hopeful for a significant positive development in the regard," she said.

Palparan has been in hiding since May 2006 when Judge Teodoro Gonzales of Regional Trial Court Branch 34 in Bulacan, Bulacan province, issued separate arrest warrants for him and three enlisted men for the abduction of University of the Philippines students Sherlyn Cadapan and Karen Empeño in June 2006. (See story on this page.)

Hours earlier, Palparan was barred from boarding a Singapore-bound plane at Diosdado Macapagal International Airport in Pampanga on De Lima's orders.

The Bureau of Immigration (BI) has alerted all its personnel in airports and seaports to be on the lookout for Palparan, who is also a barangay captain in Antipolo.

The BI Intelligence Chief and concurrent spokesperson Ma. Antonette Mangaoang said the bureau yesterday received from the court the hold-departure order on Palparan et al.

"We can no longer leave in the absence of an allow-departure order or an order from the court lifting the hold-departure order. He would be allowed to depart," Mangaoang told reporters.

She said Immigration Commissioner Ricardo David had issued a directive informing all Immigration offices about the hold-departure order.

Facebook

In the City of San Fernando, the National Bureau of Investigation team tracking Palparan is thinking proactively after the search proved fruitless on its second day.

The NBI Criminal Lanon director, Ricardo Diaz, said he posted a message in Palparan on the latter's Facebook page, hoping to draw the fugitive out of hiding or to coax his 3,000 Facebook "friends" to help arrest the ex-general themselves.

"I sent him a message offering to open negotiations to prevent unwanted bloodshed," Diaz said. "In the spirit of Christmas, I told him we could negotiate the how and when of his surrender."

Palparan used to contact the bureau in Pampanga after the Department of Justice (DOJ) approved the filing of kidnapping and serious illegal detention charges against him, ex-Col. Felipo Anonuevo, S/Sgt. Edgardo Osorio and SI Sgt. Raul Hilario. But Palparan has not been accessible for the last two days.

Anonuevo and Osorio are now in police custody; Hilario is at large.

Diaz said he had not uploaded a copy of the arrest warrant on Palparan's wall, because "[it] would not have any legal bearing."

"[An arrest warrant] should be personally served, but I'm using Facebook to send him a message. ... By the way, our rules on criminal procedure never stated before Facebook [was invented]. Since we can never find him in Skype," Diaz said.

He said Palparan's last Facebook posting was on Dec. 7.

The NBI waited for a response until after noon yesterday but it did not receive a reply from Palparan.

Diaz also urged reporters to help persuade Palparan to surrender.

"Perhaps you can call or text him [to ask] if we can negotiate. Otherwise, tracker teams will surely catch up with him one of these days. What he is doing [by hiding] is different from what [the told reporters] in his interviews – that he would not resist the authorities who would serve the warrant. He is obviously hiding," Diaz later said by text message.

Positive results soon

President Aquino aired the assurance that Palparan would soon fall into the hands of the authorities.

"Let me not state a specific time frame, but you will see positive results shortly," the President said after welcoming hundreds of overseas Filipino workers returning home for the holidays at Ninoy Aquino International Airport Terminal 3 in Pasay City.

He said the government had a good track record in resolving "sensational issues with regards to peace and order."

"Given enough time, and perhaps very soon, you will see positive results," he added.

The President's spokesperson, Edwin Lacierda, said that the intelligence community was looking at possible areas where Palparan would take refuge, and that Malacañang was optimistic he would be "apprehended."

"We are still hopeful that he will decide to surrender, and it will make life easier for all of us," Lacierda told reporters.

He said Palparan could not have left the country because all exit were secured and being monitored by authorities.

Lacierda also appealed to the public to alert authorities on any "valid sighting" of Palparan.

He warned those who would attempt to aid Palparan in hiding from authorities that they could be liable to court for being "an accessory to the crime."

He also said the government was treating Palparan as "a common criminal."

'Special treatment'

But political prisoners Alan Jazmines, Edmundo Intrinsico and Rolando Concepcion, who are being held at the PNP Custodial Center in Camp Crame in Quezon City, said Palparan's counterpart, Anonuevo and Osorio, were being given "special treatment" by police.

In a statement, Jazmines, Intrinsico and Concepcion welcomed the issuance of arrest warrants on Palparan et al.

"We hope that Palparan himself would soon be arrested, detained, tried, found guilty and punished for crimes against humanity—extrajudicial killings, forced disappearances, torture, illegal detention and other heinous terrorism and human rights violations against political activists, suspected rebels and even innocent civilians," the political prisoners said.

However, they said, "we protest the special treatment being given to Palparan's accomplices, who were brought (Wednesday) night into detention here at the PNP Custodial Center."

They said Anonuevo and Osorio had been put in a separate detention area, "where they are given special privileges much above the merely restrictive prison conditions and restrictions imposed on us political prisoners."

Own judgment

De Lima denied Palparan's remark on Monday that she had already rendered judgment on the case.

"I have not rendered any judgment. I have not even entered the filing of kidnapping and serious illegal detention charges against him and his coaccused.

She said that as in other criminal complaints filed in the DOJ, the concerned prosecutors freely made a recommendation after conducting a preliminary investigation.

"Palparan's case[, was assigned to a panel. I have nothing to do with [it]. I did not participate in [it]. Neither did I interfere in [its] work," De Lima said. "I just came in when the panel has already entered the filing of kidnapping and serious illegal detention charges against him and his coaccused.

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"Palparan's case[, was assigned to a panel. I have nothing to do with [it]. I did not participate in [it]. Neither did I interfere in [its] work," De Lima said. "I just came in when the panel has already rendered already. I don't dictate to the DOJ panels or impose on them."

State prosecutors "exercise their own independent thinking and judgment when they evaluate a particular case," De Lima said.

She added: "Everyone can expect a fair trial even if [they are involved] in high-profile cases, or even if they are members of the former administration, including the former President."

With reports from Jerome Aning and Christine O. Avendaño in Manila

REWARD Rights groups post a wanted poster for retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr.

'A judge of competence and integrity'

CITY OF MALOLOS—The case of kidnapping and serious illegal detention against retired Maj. Gen. Jovito Palparan Jr. is the biggest and most controversial that Bulacan Regional Trial Court (RTC) Judge Teodoro Gonzales since she was assigned to Branch 34 of the Bulacan Regional Trial Court (RTC) in April 2010.

Gonzales, 55, shuns media interviews, but with a smile, "leaves that to others. I am low-profile," she would often tell reporters.

A native of Calumpit town in Bulacan, Gonzales was assigned to the Public Attorney's Office in Pulilan before she was appointed municipal circuit trial court judge in the towns of Apalit and San Ildefonso in Pampanga.

She handled controversial election cases in Apalit.

She was appointed RTC judge by then President Gloria Macapagal Arroyo in 2010.

Judge Gonzales has a reputation of being strict and straight," said Jose Sarabusa, chief of the Department of Justice prosecution office in Central Luzon.

Bulacan Executive Judge Renato Francisco described her as "a judge of competence and integrity." *Carmelo Reyes-Estrope, Inquirer Central Luzon*

CBCP: Let's revive 'panunuluyan'

From page A1

Catholic Bishops Conference of the Philippines (CBCP)'s media office, yesterday urged carolers to revive the Filipino tradition of the *panunuluyan*, or the staging of Bible scenes recounting the Holy Family's search for a room in Bethlehem.

Bahot-Gabot two reasons for reviving the *panunuluyan*: It is in tune with the real spiritual meaning of Christmas, and the households being surrendered also get to participate by hosting the rehearsal.

"Personally, I will encourage this because it's catechetical [or conforming to church instruction]," he said in an interview. "There is a lesson with the movie of [Jesus'] infancy narrative when the Virgin Mary and St. Joseph endured rejection when they looked for a house to stay in Bethlehem."

Bahot-Gabot said the practice had now been largely abandoned in urban areas like Metro Manila but was still widespread in the provinces.

"Each province has its own versions of this, and it is sung in the native dialect. It's really wonderful. In our place in Samar, we call it 'pasadit' and I have even recorded it on video," he said.

Beginning Dec. 16

According to Bahot-Gabot, caroler's members go around their neighborhoods starting on the night of Dec. 16, which is also the start of the "Simbang Gabi," or the traditional dawn Masses that culminate on Christmas Eve.

"They recount the infancy narrative found in the gospels of Matthew, Mark and Luke. They come in groups or individually," he said.

The carolers would not wear costumes and they sometimes accompany a capella, or without the accompaniment of a musical instrument, Gabot said.

There are also two versions of the traditional panunuluyan—one leading for three minutes and another lasting for around 30 minutes.

"Sometimes they use modern hymns, not true pero true that are not for the Bible verses. Sometimes it's just an individual caroler singing, but mostly they are groups of adults or children," Bahot-Gabot said.

What's peculiar about this practice is that the household being serenaded also gets to join the singing.

"There are two instances—during the refrain—when the owner of the house gets to answer, as Herod and Joseph and Inspeksyon," Gabot said.

"When I was in high school, my brother and I would answer and the carolers would get confused because we'd answer in a different tune," he recalled.

'Wonderful tradition'

Gabot said P5 was usually given to each group of carolers. He said they were sometimes told to come back on the night of Dec. 23, or on Christmas Eve, if the house owner was not in a charitable mood.

But come Christmas Eve, households are expected to be generous, and parents cannot start going from house to house right after candles on Dec. 24, he said.

"On Christmas Eve, we'd get 100 individuals or groups of carolers. If a house is known for giving a large amount, you'd see four groups lining up," Gabot said.

"They would come during candles or sole (misa). It's really a wonderful tradition that we should revive and encourage," he said.

Bayug is no longer an island, says professor

From page A1

thought we would worry about the river behind us," said the 52-year-old fisherman.

But the horror of finishing are hard to bond.

An excess of victims say land died in evacuation centers across this coastal city, some swearing never to return to Bayug, a low land stained rebuilding their homes.

Island no more

Bendarig wiped out nearly all the settlements on Bayug, stripped the topsoil, uprooted trees, toppled houses, and obstructed the narrow channel that had broken off from Mindanao and that used to separate the island from the rest of Bigan.

As a result, Bayug has been "reconnected" to the Mindanao mainland, according to Oswald Amores, a professor of Mindanao State University-Iligan Institute of Technology (MSU-IIT).

"Bayug no longer an island," Almores said.

Per Almores's estimation, it will take only 50 years for the entire land mass to be decimated by the sea bodies of water surrounding it.

He said that in the past 20 years, the soil had been steadily eroding and the water creeping up the coastline as the land lost more and more ground not only to the river but also to the sea.

Almores, manager of the Bayug Mangrove Rehabilitation and Reforestation Project led by MSU-IIT, said Bayug was originally just six feet formed into a land of thousands of years ago, making the island habitable for the first settlers.

"This is a danger zone," he said. There were some 400 houses on Bayug before Bendarig, he said, and the features counted only a little more than 20 that remained standing, with varying degrees of damage.

Echavez said he himself was not thinking of leaving because he believed that his family could make it through another season, despite of the devastation.

At the height of the storm on Friday night, the fishermen herded his wife, six children, a nurse and two dogs onto a large pump boat he had secured with rope to a tree near their house.

There they hung on for dear life as the waves swelled and surged around them.

Hardened mud

It was quiet early on Wednesday when the fishermen visited Bayug, now more accessible and easier to negotiate with the mud hardening under the hot sun for the past few days.

Shrubs, bushes and fallen trees were flattened against the mud, appearing, eerily, to point at one direction—to the west, toward the sea.

Echavez and his family were hard at work cleaning their muddy house even as the stench of carcasses, many of them his own neighbors, filled the air.

More than a thousand have been reported dead in Bigan and neighboring cities, including Cagayan de Oro, and hundreds more remain missing.

Except for the houses of the fishermen and a handful of others, Bayug has become a no-man's land.

Evidence of Bendarig's destruction was everywhere—from the debris scattered on the once-lush forest littering the landscape, logs and timber mirrored on the beach, to the dead animals and three newly discovered bodies remaining partial smells.

There was neither electricity nor mobile service that another storm would come to complete what Sendong had started.

"[But] we have nowhere to go. This is our life," she said.

Irony

Almores said he found it ironic that Bayug was nearly wiped out, not by the sea, but by the endless water absorbed by rain from the uplands.

He said he and his colleagues at MSU-IIT had been working to restore and rehabilitate the mangrove forests that used to line the coast, lining the sea like a protective mantle.

Environmentalists, for and various, even from the university have pleaded 20,000 mangrove "propagules," which only recently began to shoot leaves.

As he inspected the devastated shoreline, Almores saw that all the trees had been laid to waste, with only the bamboo sticks that were used to support the mangroves now jutting from the still water.

"We will have to reassess our main move, if it is still workable to replant," he said.

Almores said the disaster, the worst in his this southern heartland in decades, was the result of a number of factors, mostly lack of foresight and little attention to the environment.

"Everybody is to blame, from the residents who burned the mangroves for firewood to the

From page A1

ing relatives were moving ahead with dozens of burials each day, after a handful of burial parlors completed they were overwhelmed and could no longer accept bodies, which were still being retrieved from the sea or mud almost a week after the disaster struck.

Cholera outbreak

Aid workers rushed in relief supplies, but a lack of running water was a major concern.

"We must improve the situation or the soonest possible time to avoid disease outbreaks that will further compound the hardships of the people already weakened by hunger and grief from loss of family and friends," Sisi said.

He mentioned a cholera type virus that may occur due to problems stemming from congestion in the evacuation centers, where poor sanitation and hygiene posed a health risk.

The National Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Council (NDRRMC) put the death toll at 1,010 and 51 missing.

However, Mayor Lawrence Cruz of Bigan said that in his area alone, more than 400 casualties had been reported missing, with another 200 confirmed dead.

"We could only assume they are dead already. There is so much mud that has to be cleared up and maybe the missing are somewhere," Cruz said.

The Philippine National Red Cross chief, Gwendolyn Pang, said that at least 900 bodies had been recovered and that some 400 people were reported missing.

"Many will never be found and we don't know how many are really missing. No one will report them because entire families were swept away," Pang said.

Search for 2 more weeks

NDRRMC Executive Director Benito Ramos said Coast Guard and Navy vessels had been deployed to a large rescue effort to find bodies floating until debris up to 150 kilometers away.

"By this time, there will be no survivors, just dead bodies," Ramos said after meeting—international rescue—Bendarig—brought heavy rains that uprooted Rock Roads, overflowing rivers and mudslides that buried bodies at swept them into the sea.

He said the search could continue for two more weeks.

A Navy vessel recovered 21 badly decomposed bodies off the coastal town of Aslay on Wednesday and Lt. Col. Omar Tomawy, a Navy spokesperson.

Those carrying bodies at sea is difficult because of the sheer volume of debris. Sea have to tow logs and risk boiling your boat or entangling your propellers," Tomawy added.

On Wednesday, a battered human remains in an improvised casket at a sanitary landfill to a hangar manned by National Power Corporation following complaints from residents whose authorities were disinterring the dead.

AWAY soldiers on Thursday evacuate more bodies on Bayug Island, one of the areas hardest hit by Tropical Storm "Sendong." MARK CRISTINO/INQUIRER.NET

It's like a tsunami hit, says UN humanitarian official

From page A1

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Antonio, 30, discouraging food, we have been brought to the garbage dump after funeral parlors said they could no longer accommodate them.

Damage to schools

The Department of Education said the storm caused an estimated P60 million in damage to 58 schools mostly in Cagayan de Oro and Bigan.

Assistant Education Secretary Reynaldo Laguda said the department was working to bring normalcy back to the affected schools when classes resume in January after the Christmas break.

Sen. Loren Legarda urged authorities to strengthen mechanisms to help children recover after calamities.

"Every time a disaster occurs, the impact on children is more likely to be greater because aside from being unable to immediately respond to natural hazards, they are also vulnerable in the aftermath of disasters, lack of food, potable water and shelter," Legarda said.

Also yesterday, labor groups marched on Mendiola to let Malacañang's lack of preparedness for disasters with the slogan "How many more will die," announces declared.

The groups said President Aquino should be held accountable for his failure to control mining and logging activities.

With reports from AMY MEE Karen Zamora, Tarra Quismundo and Gerry Bermoon

Malacañang plans reforestation in Bukidnon, Lanao Lake

From page A1

lar to that spawned by Tropical Storm "Sendong" that devastated the cities of Cagayan de Oro and Iligan last Friday, according to Presidential Adviser on Environment Nereo Acosta.

Environment experts said the hazard from the storm, the world's deadliest this year, was amplified because of soil erosion and deforestation of the mountains that surround the two cities, which are not necessarily to the path of typhoons battering the country annually.

The project is part of the P7 billion Integrated Natural Resources and Environmental Management (Irem) program, which was supposed to be approved by the National Economic Development Authority's Investment Coordination Committee last month.

The Irem is a nationwide program conceived in 2007 to reforest upland communities. It failed to gain ground over the years due to lack of government funds and willpower to push the project, despite studies showing the need for it and the availability of cash from foreign partners, sources said.

Acosta said about P4 billion of the project, to be financed by a mix of funds from the Asian Development Bank and grants from various aid agencies, will be used to reforest the highlands of Bukidnon and Lanao Lake with family, indigenous tree species that have been cut down by loggers.

It would also provide livelihood to the indigenous peoples and ensure the sustenance in the topsoil, which had been depleted by decades of logging.

"If you solve this, you would have easily solved a major chunk of Mindanao's ecological challenges," Acosta said in an interview.

Mountain forests are only irrigation and erosion, it is also critical in maintaining water quality downstream.

Vanishing forests

The Philippines used to have one of the world's hottest tropical forests. According to the Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR), of the country's land had area of 16 million hectares, around 53 percent is found land.

Over the years, logging, mining and the encroachment of human settlements have reduced the country's forest cover.

Based on the 2003-2005 satellite surveys, the country's total forest cover is estimated at 7.168 million ha, or 24.27 percent of the total land area. The remaining 8 million ha are unproductive, open, denuded or degraded, the DENR said.

A forestry expert who was privy to the Irem project since the beginning said Cabinet officials had questioned the project's funding at several stages.

It also appeared that three officials could not understand the urgency of the project, the source said, saying that many of their questions were focused on local administration.

"This is already late in five years in the making," the source said.

Acosta, who has been pushing for the project, lamented that the project was not approved this year, despite a study ADB loan and a big ticket grant from the Japan International Cooperation Agency.

"They are waiting for the government's approval," Acosta said.

Doubts about project

He said some Palace officials were wary of the loan component. Another official also suggested that the money be shared with other Mindanao provinces, Acosta said.

Acosta, who was a Bukidnon congressman, expressed shocked the funding with other areas.

"The end of the watersheds of Bukidnon and Lanao Lake is very sensitive because all the rainwater in the top soil here been scraped by logging," he explained.

There were watershed areas already find the six major rivers of Mindanao, including Cagayan River and the Iligan Bay, which also supply water to rivers that originate on the hills of Mindanao.

Environment officials said the forest program would be an expensive mistake approximately if the government failed to act on it.

Acosta said the Philippines had wasted major reforestation programs in the past.

Failed $128-M project

One major program from 1988 through the late 1990s was also funded by the ADB with a $128 million loan. An ADB assessment said the project was ill-planned and many of the trees died because they were unsuitable to the land.

Typically, trees are planted right across the country because of political considerations and were thus less effective than if they had been focused on areas with higher prospects of success and higher productivity," the ADB said.

Archbishop Antonio Ledesma and civil society groups have asked President Aquino to declare the Cagayan de Oro river basin as a protected watershed area to avoid a repeat of Friday's devastation, according to the Catholic Bishops' Conference of the Philippines news website.

The resolution blamed the destruction on the "irresponsible and reckless exploitation of our watershed forests, leading to river siltation which reduced the city's capacity to hold extreme water load."

The petitioners said Mr. Aquino should go beyond helping the victims and "delve into the causes of the catastrophe "and make urgent corrective steps and corrections that constituted lost."

A multiagency task force created by the President will investigate the disaster, among other things, why a community was established on his de Oro in Cagayan de Oro when it was known to be hazardous, according to presidential spokesperson Edwin Lacierda.

Many of those killed in the city center Isla de Oro Local authorities were blamed for the construction of dwellers in the area, where returns have been banned by the President. With a report from Philip C. Tubeza and Norman Bordadora

Health Advisory
Kalusugan sa Kapaskuhan

Ang kapaskuhan ay mas masaya,
kung ang pamilya ay malusog at masigla.
Isaalala ang 12 mensahe para sa kalusugan sa kapaskuhan.

1. Maghanda nang maaga para sa makahulugan na Kapaskuhan upang ang stress ay maiwasan.

Ang pagmumuniti at labis na paghanda sa pagdiwang ng Pasko ay maaring magdulot ng pagkabahala at mga komplikasyon sa sakit sa puso at altapresyon.

2. Magregalo sa mga bata ng mga laruan na ligtas at angkop sa kanilang edad at abilidad.

Pilin ang mga laruan na walang bahaging matalis, matulis, nakakalason, madaling matunaw o kayo'y may maliliit na bahagi na maaring nabo at makabasa sa lalamunan at makatarok sa mata. Ilong o tenga. Basahin ang etiketa o tatak sa pakete ng produkto at sundin ang mga paunta para sa tamang paggamit nito.

3. Bumili lamang ng mga produktong lehitimo at rehistrado upang ligtas na Kapaskuhan ay masigurado.

Pangalagaan ang kapalig nan , kalusugan at pamilya. Tiyakin na ang mga christmas lights, pandi at iba ng dekorasyon sa bahay ay galing sa rehistrado at lehitimo na tindahan. Huwag iwanan ang mga ilaw pangdekorasyon, kung ang mga ito bago mailagay o kapag aalis ng bahay para maiwasan ang sunog.

4. Noche Buena at Media Noche ay paghandaan, masustansyang pagkain, gulay at prutas ang ihain sa kainan.

Ang gulay at prutas ay mabuba sa kalorlya at mataag tagiay na kolesterol. Ang mga ito ay tagpasa sa mga bitamina at mineral na magpapalgla ng katawan at magbibigay proteksyon sa sakit at impeksyon.

5. Mga pagkain na ihahanda ay tiyaking malinis at sariwa upang ang inyong pamilya'y siguradong ligtas sa food poisoning.

Bumili ng pamutong at pagkain mula sa tiyak at mapagkakatiwalang tindahan. Pawalihin na mainit, mayr lalay o malutlage sa ice box o refrigerator upang maiwasan ang pagkasira o kontaminadong pagkain.

6. Dumalo sa bawat salo-salo sa Pasko, ngunit sapat lamang na pagkain sa plato ang bantayan mo.

Maraming kanyahan sa Pasko at maraming okasyon para magsalo-salo sa marami ing kamlikan. Huwag baligtaan na kumain ng tamang dami lamang. Iwasan ang "second serving" para makaiwas sa madalas na pagtaas ng timbang ng katawan tuwing Kapaskuhan.

7. Umiwas sa labis na matatabo at maasiat na pagkain upang puso at pangangatawan ay manatiling malusog.

Ang maraka at maalat na mga pagkain ang madalas na nagdudulot ng sakit sa puso at iba pang sakit sa pangangatawan .

8. Magsaya at magdiwang kung Kapaskuhan, subalit labis na pag-inom ng alak at mga nakalalasing na inumin ay iwasan. Huwag magmaneho ng sasakyan kapag naka-inom ng alak.

Ang labis na pag-inom ng alak ay nagdudulot ng pinsala sa atay at komplikasyon sa sakit sa puso o "stroke". Ang pagmumaneho nang lasing ay kasamang sanhi ng nakapatmala o makamamatay na aksidente sa kalye at lansangan.

9. Maglakad, tumakbo, sumayaw o regular na mag-ehersisyo para masigla ang katawan sa Pasko.

Ang katamtaman at regular na gawaing pisikal ay maraming dulot na benepisyo sa puso, mga buto at utak. Ito ay nakakatagpog sa self-esteem o maayos na pamatawan sa sarili.

10. Pahinga at sapat na oras ng pagtulog ay kailangan sa mahabang panahon nang kasayahan sa Kapaskuhan.

Magiaan ng panahon para sa sapat na pahinga, talog at alwan ng pamilya. Ito ay nakakatulong upang mapanumbalik ang kasiglahan ng katawan at isipan.

11. Aksyon: Paputok Injury Reduction
Umiwas sa Disgrasya Dulot ng Paputok.

1. Mapanguri ang paggamit ng paputok.
2. Lubat ng paputok ay bawal sa bata.
3. Umiwas sa mga taong magsapaputok.
4. Huwag mamulot ng mga di sumabog na paputok.
5. Magpagamot kaagad kapag napatukan.

12. Aksyon: Paputok Injury Reduction
Magdiwang ng Pasko at Bagong Taon nang ligtas

1. Magopol at makilahok sa Community Fireworks Display.
2. Magdiwang nang ligtas kasama ang pamilya.
3. Lumikha ng inyga-gantl ang ibang bagay tulad r ng torotot, busina, maraka, lata at iba pa.
4. Makisaya sa ibang paraan tulad ng street party, concert, palaro at iba pa.
5. Manood sa mga local ng nakatakam at magpamala ng maayos na bahay sa Bagong Taon..

SPORTS
Editor Teddyvic S. Melendres
Assistant Editor Francis T.J. Ortuoste

Mayweather sentenced to 90 days in jail

Pacquiao bout now in doubt

FLOYD Mayweather Jr. appears in a Las Vegas court with lawyer Karen Mircker to plead guilty to domestic violence and other charges Wednesday. Mayweather received a six-month sentence and will have to spend at least 90 days in jail. | AP

LAS VEGAS—Boxing champion Floyd Mayweather Jr. is a perfect 42-0 in the ring and has dodged significant jail time several times in domestic violence cases in Las Vegas and Michigan.

But his streak appears about over to an end Wednesday when a Las Vegas judge ordered him jailed for 90 days after he pleaded guilty to a reduced battery domestic violence charge and no-contest to two harassment charges.

The case stemmed from a bar-calling, punching and arm-twisting sequence with his ex-girlfriend, Josie Harris, while two of their children watched in September 2012.

"Punishment is appropriate," Justice of the Peace Melissa Saragosa said after a prosecutor complained that Mayweather has been in trouble before and hasn't faced serious consequences.

"No matter who you are, you have consequences to your actions when they escalate in this level of violence," she said.

Good behavior could knock several weeks off Mayweather's sentence. But he will likely serve most of the sentence, not to begin Jan. 6, and Bill Connell, a Las Vegas police spokesman.

Mayweather and his manager, Leonard Ellerbe, declined comment.

Possible showdown

The jail time raises doubts about a possible showdown between Mayweather and Manny Pacquiao, the eight-division champion fighter from the Philippines against whom Mayweather's undefeated success is usually measured.

A long-rumored fight between the two most respected in among the best of their generation has been delayed by stalling techniques and verbal sparring.

The two men have a defamation lawsuit pending in Las Vegas federal court stemming from statements by Mayweather that his supports Pacquiao was taking performance-enhancing drugs.

Mayweather returned in September from a 10-month layoff to continue his undefeated record with a controversial knockout of Victor Ortiz in Las Vegas.

May 5 date for next fight

Mayweather's promoters have a May 5 date reserved against an as-yet unnamed opponent at the MGM Grand Garden Arena. But if Mayweather is jailed until the end of March, it could cut into the usual eight-plus months he takes in a ring.

Keith Kizer, executive director of the Nevada Athletic Commission, said licensees for all fights are regular on Saturday, and most, including Mayweather, have yet to reapply for next year.

He said Mayweather would be asked under his license application if he was convicted of any misdemeanors or felonies.

Jim Gavin, a spokesman for Pacquiao's promoter Top Rank and Bob Arum, declined comment on Mayweather's sentencing and its possible effect on a match.

Mayweather, 36, stood tall in a striped shirt vest and showed no reaction as the judge sentenced him to six months in the Clark County jail, then suspended half the term.

She gave him credit for three days previously served in jail and ordered him to complete 100 hours of community service, pay a $1,500 fine and complete a year-long domestic violence counseling program.

The plea deal avoided trial on felony and misdemeanor that could have gotten Mayweather 36 years in state prison if convicted.

Mayweather (also is expected to plead no-contest next week to a separate misdemeanor harassment charge involving a 22-year-old village security guard who was pulled in the face during an argument about parking tickets placed on cars outside the hotel's home. AP

Floyd Jr. out as next foe

By Ray Loiza

MANNY Pacquiao should now train his sights on an opponent other than Floyd Mayweather Jr.

Much as the Filipino eight-division world champion wants to fight the unbeaten Mayweather instead, the detention justice system deprived him and the fight fans of the dream showdown until after the first half of 2014.

Lawyer Jeng Gacal, Interpol-Bgy. Pinagkaisa chief of staff, told the Inquirer yesterday that Mayweather's three-month jail sentence starting on Jan. 6 effectively quashed hopes of the megabuck bout happening in May—at even in June—as envisioned by the Filipino superstar's promoter Bob Arum.

"Apparently, he (Mayweather) is out of the picture," said Gacal. "Unless a suspension [of the three-month jail sentence] occurs, there's no way for the fight to push through."

Even that is wishful thinking on half of Mayweather' six-month sentence has already been suspended by Las Vegas Judge Melissa Saragosa.

MCQUILLO: Three possible rivals

With Mayweather unavailable until early April, Pacquiao and Arum may have to look for other candidates, who, however, will bring in far less money to the fight than the flamboyant American, the fastest pound-for-pound king.

According to Gacal, if Mayweather fails to get another suspension of [the] three more months of his sentence], the short list of possible Pacquiao foe will be made up of Josh Manuel Marquez, who is very keen on a fourth fight with the Filipino; Miguel Cotto, who is seeking revenge from a 12-round stoppage handed him by Pacquiao in 2009; and World Boxing Organization light welterweight champion Timothy Bradley.

Against Marquez, whom he beat by majority decision last month, Pacquiao earned at least $25 million. That would pale in comparison, however, to a projected Pacquiao earnings of at least $50 million against Mayweather.

Before Mayweather's guilty plea and eventual sentencing, Pacquiao had already agreed to a smaller share of the prize purse and to an Olympic-style drug-testing ban to lure Mayweather back into the negotiating table.

The Mayweather camp can still appeal the decision, but the motion would only prolong the court proceedings and endanger the chances of the Pacquiao fight pushing through.

CHAMPS GAME'S BEST JUNIOR FIVE
The San Beda College Red Cubs, NCAA juniors champion, with PCO chair Rey D. Dimboa, SBC athletic director Ara Bautista, ABS-CBN Foundation chair Regina Lopez. The Red Cubs won the NCAA-UAAP Junior Champions Challenge recently, beating the UAAP champion, National University Bullpups, in the NCAA-UAAP dual meet for the benefit of ABS-CBN Foundation's "Kapit Bisig Para sa Bag Pasig" project.

Lim gains Orange Bowl tennis finals

By Marc Anthony Reyes

TWELVE-YEAR-OLD Filipino ether Lim Jr., cruised a win by barging into the finals in his first stint in the Orange Bowl international tennis championships 12s in Coral Gables, Florida, on Wednesday.

A qualifier in the United States Tennis Association-sanctioned event, Lim worked his way past a number of seeded players in the main draw then ousted ninth seed Noah Mekkonnine of the United States, 6-2, 6-1, to roll into the finals.

Mekkonnine reached the semifinals with a hard-earned 3-6, 6-4, 7-5 triumph over American Sam Riffice to chortle that lasted two and a half hours.

Lim, who awaits ranked the No. 2 American Alexander del Corral, 6-2, 6-1, forged a final showdown with top seed Arnon Beleinay of Russia, who ousted sixth seed Egil Klitten of Turkey 6-1, 6-0.

Although noted for his natural quickness and power, Lim will have his hands full against Dalenteng who just won the Eddie Herr tournament.

But Lim has momentum on his side and will face the Russian having already won 18 matches since the qualifying rounds.

"He (Lim) has been showing a lot of promise since he began competing in the 10-under," said Philippine Tennis Association vice president Randy Villanueva.

"What's good here is that Al [Lim's nickname] is a home-grown talent. He represents the new breed of Filipino netters."

The Orange Bowl is one of only five Grade A tournaments in the junior circuit.

NBA spotlight falls on Paul, Howard on Yuletide day

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DALDALOOTO—"Hippie, we have a reason," Carlo G. exclaimed. Here is the big date! Reverse my situation! Reverse effect is clear as water.

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Among the only games of the opening week will be the marquee matchup between the Los Angeles Lakers and the Chicago Bulls, a rematch of the 2013 NBA Finals between the Dallas Mavericks and the Miami Heat, dominated by 08-time-loser coach Erik Spoelstra, and a faceoff between the Boston Celtics and the New York Knicks.

I'm quite sure the cable providers in the Philippines will move the whole plan to usher the opposite of tradition.

But the games most likely to arouse attention this early are those pitting the Los Angeles Clippers and the Golden State Warriors, and the Oklahoma Thunder and the Orlando Magic.

Chris Paul, formerly of the New Orleans Hornets, always get traded to the Lakers, but inconvenience by the league, since it owns the Hornets, now lists its star Clippers instead. Chris, a four-time All Star, will get to play in a bigger market, but in the shadow of the marquee team.

Meanwhile, the Warriors, without Paul, will face more of their fair bear, an iconic NBA Center, one David Stern, who called the shots in the final ends June rulers.

The Magic will square off with the Thunder and the team here will be on Orlando's Dwight Howard.

The center forward, a.k.a. Superman, has no call his team when he parties—whether he'd stay and sign a long-term contract, leave through a trade or explore the marketplace next June.

I share the grief of former colleagues and PBA attendees: Eli Boggs and Bob Hardy. Hey mates, Pearl Scarlette, Michelle Vargas, planted many lines. Ed, their economics major fainted at the roulette counters in Cagayan. Marvin Ecija (hey, Ty. News of the death was reheard to me by Teddy Melendres, a cousin of Jill's.

Easily three I saw home in Cagayan during my days as a young, starving newspaperman, Mrs. Yanga was a prominent lawyer in the area and the morning here and that double-tape clock game answer with her line from friend Spong, myself and a roommate Buddha, Ricardo Cassandra, also deceased).

Mamerto Epling and Mesang Paring always believed that their eldest son, Ito, their a gambling, clumsy ball player to Cagayan's more-bumpy leagues, would someday rise to captivate the nation as a national player and a PBA superstar. And by golly, he now did.

HOME OF CHAMPS Champion Bonanjan Bar and Powder hosts the future champions of Philippine golf as it sponsors the golden staging of the Philippine Ladies Open on Jan. 11 to 13 at Wack Wack. Photo shows Simeon Tiu (right), president of Peerless Products Manufacturing Corp., and Wu Co, president of the organizing Women's Golf Association of the Philippines, during the contract signing. Also in photo are (standing, from left) Perlhagan PPMC corporate marketing director, WGAP treasurer Ros Sioco, WGAP handicap chair Minerva Castillo, Jasper Tiu, PPMC VP for sales and marketing, WGAP VP Lorna Tabacaru, WGAP PR Cris Ventosa, and PPMC marketing manager Carlos Bacani.

ABS-CBN, TV5 want exclusive rights to Azkals games

By Cedrik F. Tapas

THE PHILIPPINE Football Federation is looking to stoke a television deal worth at least P60 million for the rights to air matches of the Philippine Azkals next year.

A reliable source told The Daily Tribune that television networks ABS-CBN and TV5 have submitted bids to the PFF for the exclusive rights to the Azkals games in 2012.

The source said the PFF's target amount of P60 million already includes non-monetary benefits like airtime, promotions and mileage with the actual money going to the federation amounting to just about P15 to P20 million.

"The PFF is looking at P60 million, but the present, of the amount is non-monetary," said the source.

ABS-CBN is actually hoping to extend its partnership with the Azkals that started with the AFC Challenge Cup game against Mongolia in February last year.

The same source revealed that the PFF rammed at least P8 million from the ABS-CBN deal that was also spent for expenses to incurred during the Azkals' two games.

The PFF Board will decide on the television deal on Jan. 13.

The Azkals actually have a busy schedule for 2012 with two major tournament lined up starting with the AFC Challenge Cup in Bishkenek, Nepal, in March.

Before the Challenge Cup, where the Azkals have been grouped with South Korea, Tajikistan and India, the national team will also face reigning Southeast Asian champion Malaysia in a FIFA-sanctioned friendly on Feb. 29 at the Rizal Memorial Stadium.

The PFF will also see the international friendly dates in June to hold four matches for the team.

Friendly matches in the months of August, September and October are also slated for the Azkals as they toughen up for the Suzuki Cup in December.

F YOUNGHUSBAND. Azkals goalkeep

Can Mavericks repeat as NBA champions?

ONE GAME AT A TIME

SIX SANTAMARIA

BY THE hoopla over the start of the NBA season and the rosters that have been perfected before the opening tip-off on Christmas Day (Monday in Manila), there hasn't been much speculating on whether the Dallas Mavericks can repeat as champions.

Chris Paul's move to the LA Clippers grabbed a chunk of the headlines simply because the talented point guard has given the second Los Angeles franchise credibility and even a chance at making it to the playoffs. With last year's finalists the new Miami Heat and the Clippers will give LA fans, who don't exactly like the Lakers, more than enough to cheer about.

Can the Mavs repeat? Or do they have an edge Pat Riley used to say enough curses not to remember of course that when Riley was coaching the Lakers in the 80s, he guaranteed that the team would repeat after winning in the 86-87 season. After declaring "Three-peat, I guarantee we'll do it again," Riley turned to his team's immediately and caught the team by surprise but guys Magic Johnson and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar a target to vouch for.

Riley may be the best NBA announcer to the top his squad said no one gave the grand alibi for not wanting to repeat: injuries, fatigue, pressure or stronger competition. Riley sounded his locus to go for it because up to that point in NBA history, no team had repeated since the Boston Celtics of 1968 and 1969. The Lakers did repeat and gave Riley coaches of NBA legend.

I give the Mavs a 70 percent chance of doing it, assuming they have no major injury issue throughout the season. Lineup-wise, they've bolstered their frontline with the addition of Lamar Odom, the Lakers' Roby Rebate really didn't want to part with. With Shawn Marion, Brandon Haywood and of course, Dirk Nowitzki, the Mavericks will give NBA teams nightmare.

It's in the backcourt where there's so much interest and speculation. Jason Kidd will now have Vince Carter from and that's where a lot's doubt. The decision for Dallas is that Kidd knows how to suppress his need to want to give up the ball to a high-scoring teammate. Kidd is no longer a spring chicken but has enough basketball savvy left to run the bluescher show. He'll give up the ball to Carter whenever it's needed.

The backcourt backup core is also interesting. Jason Terry is still around and has enough budget to start it second side. Backup Delonte West, acquired from Boston, is a point guard who has energy but will be a weak in progress in his attempt to blend with the Dallas rotation.

Center Mark Cuban and the Mavs will rules their championship banner on opening night with their fans and the Miami Heat, their opening day opponent and finish for last year, in attendance. They'll need the same drive and energy of the Lakers of the 80's to win it again. Versatile but defensively challenged Shawn Bob Cuellar isn't going to guarantee anything but will try to find a way to contribute his troops to raise a second banner next year.

Support for medal hopefuls assured

THE BEACH volleyball tandem of Alyx Pineda (pictured) and Jovelyn Gonzaga failed to land a medal in the recent Indonesia SEA Games. The PH duo lost, 14-21, 8-21, to a Thai pair. CHRISTIAN ALEJANDRO

By Jose Mesiara

PHILSPORTS Sports Commission chair Ricardo Garcia will spare athletes with high medal chances from the chronic financial cut to be imposed on their nonperforming national sports associations (NSAs).

Garcia said the sports-funding agency would set aside a separate budget for the exceptional athletes since it says the annual allocation these NSAs still get next year.

The PSC has earlier announced that NSAs which performed poorly in the recent Southeast Asian Games should expect a 2012 budget slash by at least 50 percent.

"The NSA might not be performing but if their athletes are doing good, we should identify these athletes and support them," said Garcia.

Several sports failed to achieve their target in the SEA Games held in Indonesia and a handful even went home without a medal of any color, among them aquatics, football, volleyball, gymnastics, badminton, petanque, futsal, rowing, kayak and weightlifting.

The Philippines finished sixth overall winning 11 competing recoveries in the biennial meet with a record low output of 16 gold, 56 silver and 77 bronze medals.

"We're planning to adopt up to three athletes from the NSAs which didn't perform well and focus on them for the next SEA Games," said Garcia.

He said NSAs are considered rampaging if they brought a platoon of athletes in the games and not come up with one or no medal at all.

The PSC will review the performance of the 41 NSAs under the Philippine Olympic Committee next month to determine the amount of financial assistance they should receive next year.

Garcia said the non-performing NSAs should start to look for a corporate sponsor to write their monetary concerns.

"The government cannot sustain and maintain these NSAs if they couldn't show any (medals)," he said.

Biado takes turn at Taiwan's Chang tonight

By Cedrik F. Tapas

BIADO

CHANG

FILIPINO ace Carlo Biado tries to avenge the loss of teammate Roberto Gomez when he takes on Taiwan's Chang Jung-lin tonight in the Philippine Billiards Race 600 at the Baguio Airport Casino in Pasalubong.

Ranked No. 16 in the world, Biado vows to stop Chang, who ripped his fellow Bagio Pride member, Gomez, 6-5, in another PBR duel recently.

"He (Chang) won against Gomez and that will be my motivation against him," said the La Union-born Biado. "I want to make sure that I do well against him. Don't why I prepared hard for this match."

At stake in the showdown promoted by Mega Sports World and BILLIARD Corp. is a $5,000 purse for the winner.

The betting lines are favoring Chang, with a $1 wager on the Taiwanese netting just $1.60. A $1 bet on Biado would win $2.82 in the case he is 16 ball affair.

The match will be aired live over Solar Sports Sky Channel 70 and Destiny Channel 24.

Also backing the event are Airport Center Pilipino, Carson Social System, Iwasaki Amplifiers and Home Theater Systems, Mahogan Life Oil, Diamond Billiard table, Hexacon Sports Bar, I Bet, Golden Land Restaurant, Buggy Restaurant, Mandarin Sky Inn Pool Restaurant, Billiards Shangrai and Players Association of the Philippines.

The next PBS Box Off Series on Dec. 30 pits Wu Chen Ching of China against Filipino legend Efren "Bata" Reyes.

Bryant injures right wrist, playing status up in air

BRYANT AP

LOS ANGELES—Kobe Bryant did not play in the Los Angeles Lakers' preseason finale against the Clippers on Wednesday night because of a sore ligament in his right wrist, and his status for the season opener on Christmas Day is up in the air.

A magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) test revealed the extent of the injury, which occurred early in the third quarter of the Lakers' 114-95 loss to the Clippers on Monday night. Bryant was examined by Dr. Steven Shin of the Kerlan-Jobe Orthopaedic Clinic. Depending on the degree of the tear, he could be sidelined as long as three to four weeks.

"He's day-to-day. As soon as I figure it out, I will let you guys know," said coach Mike Brown, who took over this season after the retirement of Phil Jackson. "The doctor has to clear him. There's a chance, though, that he could play [tomorrow]."

Bryant, who shoots right-handed, was seen reaching out to Clippers point guards Chris Paul or Eric Bledsoe after a dribble-drive and come up holding the wrist. He stayed on the game for another three minutes.

Argentina names Messi top sportsman

BUENOS AIRES—Barcelona's Lionel Messi was named as Argentina's sports personality of the year on Wednesday, winning the Olimpia de Oro (gold) for the first time.

MESSI

The prize, for first in his home country, is awarded by Argentina's sports writers and follows a year in which his goals helped Barca win Spain's La Liga, the European Champions League and the Club World Cup.

"I'm happy and proud of the award. Thanks to God, I've received prizes all over the world but I'd never before had one in Argentina," the 24-year-old captain said.

Messi is also in line to win a third consecutive Ballon d'Or, the prize for the world's best footballer.

He returned to Argentina to spend the Christmas and New Year holidays with family and friends in his home town of Rosario.

The Olimpia de Oro race rests by Luciano Aymar, captain of Argentina's world championship winning hockey team, in 2004 and former F1 Ayrton Senna champion Juan Manuel del Potro in 2009.

The only runners that made Messi a run for his money were Argentina, which was eliminated from the Copa America in the quarterfinals despite hosting the tournament this year.

"I like to win things with my club and with the national team," Messi said. "We'll keep working with lots of enthusiasm and belief."

Reuters, AP

NCAA Mancom shares blessing with young orphans

MEMBERS of the Management Committee of the 87th National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) took time out from their busy schedule to personally donate sacks of rice, canned goods, toys and other gifts to children in the Hospicio de San Jose as part of the league's outreach program.

The activity was spearheaded by Manuel Conrado de Borman Conrado of Perpetual Help, Henry Amador of College of St. Benilde, Kenneth Cardozo of Emilio Aguinaldo College, Hector Calimlim of Lyceum and Peter Cayco of Arellano.

The visit was arranged by Cayco's wife Grace, who is in charge of the hospicio's personnel services.

After providing inspiration were volleyball players from Arellano, Perpetual and Lyceum.

They were welcomed by Hospicio directress Sis. Aurora Reidener and some 50 children, who performed song and dance numbers.

Hans Jan Ibarra, Arellano Dean of Student Affairs, emceed the two-hour program, which culminated with the giving of gifts.

In his closing speech, Amador told the children that "we came here to give back something to you, but in fact, you were the ones who gave us more."

"In our lives, we will come with or past moments of fears and of inspiration. But you have given us joy today," said Amador. Steve Silva, Contributor

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DID YOU KNOW

THERE were nearly 600,000 informal settler families in Metro Manila as of July, according to the recent accomplishment report of the Metropolitan Manila Development Authority.

Scholar Chendelo Inquirer Research

TRAGEDY IN ANTIPOLO CITY

8 dead, 12 hurt in road mishap

By Kristine Felisse Marguesa

A RUNAWAY 18-wheel truck plowed into two vehicles and a row of houses and an eatery by the roadside in Antipolo City shortly before noon yesterday, leaving eight people dead, including a 1-year-old boy, and 12 others injured.

An initial police investigation showed that the accident happened after the brakes of the cargo truck (DFO 594) failed as it was traveling on Sumulong Highway in Barangay Mambugan on its way to Marikina.

Philip Ardinero, the driver of the truck, told the police that he tried to force the vehicle to a stop by ramming it into an unoccupied jeepney and a passenger jeep.

The truck, however, kept on running and plowed into a row of houses and an eatery before it came to a stop.

Based on the documents found in the vehicle, it was registered to Rosa del Rosario of Bold Sun Enterprise in Caloocan City.

The police also found a sachet of "shabu" (methamphetamine hydrochloride) and a lighter inside the 10-wheeler although they have yet to determine whether the driver was high on drugs at the time of the accident.

Authorities initially placed the number of fatalities at three but as the retrieval operations continued, the figure went up to eight.

Joey Marco, officer in charge of the City Disaster Risk Reduction Office, identified the dead as Marilyn Corpuz, Jonathan Sarol, 10, Jason Sarol, 17, and Lito Tobias, 53.

The rest have yet to be identified.

Senior Supt. Manuel Piñero, Rizal provincial police director, told the Inquirer that most of the fatalities were residents who happened to at the eatery when the accident occurred.

Six died on the spot while the others passed away while receiving treatment at a hospital.

Those who were injured, on the other hand, were Adriano and Antonio Mo-

ICMAR-AAA

Shorter hours for LRT, MRT

By Paolo G. Montecillo

INTO fewer people expected as rain to the streets on Dec. 24 and 31, the Department of Transportation and Communications (DOTC) announced yesterday that Metro Manila's three overhead light trains will observe shorter operating hours on those days.

But at the same time, the DOTC assured the public that, despite the shortened operating hours, the reliability of services and the safety of passengers would not be compromised, adding that security measures would be intensified.

"In line with the DOTC's 'Safe Christmas' campaign, the Light Rail Transit (LRT) au-

SHORTER HOURS, A24

PASSENGERS bound for provinces in the northern part of Luzon try to find ways to pass the time as they wait for buses at a terminal in Pasay City. AP/EDGAR SU

QC police check on security in public transport terminals

By Julie M. Aurelio

THE QUEZON City police yesterday began inspecting major bus terminals in the area as part of their preparations for the expected increase in the number of passengers going home to their provinces for the holidays.

Members of the Quezon City Police District (QCPD) led by their director, Chief Supt. George Regis, visited the Araneta Center Bus Terminal in the Cubao area as well as other bus stations on Edsa to monitor the safety and security measures being implemented by bus operators.

They also dropped by several areas of the Light Rail Transit and Metro Rail Transit located in the city.

"We expect in the coming days the exodus of our kababayans, including foreign and local tourists, who wish to spend Christmas and New Year [in] the provinces," Regis said in a statement.

In addition to reinforcing inspections, the QCPD has deployed several of its men to public transport terminals to maintain peace and order.

For passengers who find themselves in an emergency or in need of police assistance, they may call the QCPD hotlines at 9328417, 4743106, 0918-7953735 or 0915-2362000.

They may also seek help from the Philippine National Police's Patrol 117 hotline or the National Capital Region Police Office's "Sabihan Mo Pe Rami" at 0922-8888181 or 0999-9058181.

"We are in constant contact with the security officers of the public transport terminals in order to respond promptly to any call for police assistance," Regis said.

METROBRIEFS

Vegetable vendor shot dead in Manila

A 67-YEAR-OLD vendor was shot dead while he was buying vegetables at Divisoria in Tondo, Manila, before dawn yesterday, the police said. Case investigator PO2 Bernardo Dayritayh of the Manila Police District homicide section said that Antonelli Cosmo died on the spot due to two gunshot wounds to the back of his head. He was buying vegetables to sell at the Sta. Ana Market when two men on a motorcycle, Lilyboh Palomo, whom he was killed. "She told me that they were buying produce separately at the time. She said she only saw Cosmo lying on the ground after hearing gunshots. She could not think of anyone who would want him killed," Dayritayh said. He added that although there were several witnesses, none of them was willing to talk. Cosmo's remains have been turned over to a funeral home for autopsy.

ERWIN BONCALAN, INQUIRER.net

UP employee found dead on school campus

AN EMPLOYEE of the University of the Philippines (UP) was found dead with a gunshot wound to the head. Case investigator PO1 Anna Sacramento said they have not yet ruled out foul play in the death of Moises Botello Pancho, 36, a laboratory assistant at the College of Engineering, whose body was discovered behind the Bahay ng Alumni building on the UP campus in Diliman, Quezon City, on Wednesday evening. Beside him was an improvised pistol. Initial investigation showed that the victim may have killed himself over a bitter love affair.

Julie M. Aurelio

Caloocan donates P1M to 'Sendong' victims

CALOOCAN Mayor and League of Cities of the Philippines (LCP) Chair Enrico "Recto" Echiverri has announced that he would donate P1 million for the victims of Tropical Storm "Sendong" in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan City. "Each city will receive P500,000. I expect my fellow mayors in LCP to live by the meaning of Christmas by providing financial assistance to the victims of Sendong. Hopefully, through this we will be able to impart the true spirit of unity to our country," Echiverri said. The death toll due to the devastation wrought by Sendong is expected to top 1,000 on top of millions of pesos worth of damage to property and infrastructure.

Jeepney driver, 5 cohorts rob passengers blind in Pasay City

By Jeannette I. Andrade

SIX HOLDUP men who apparently forgot to bring masks or hide their identities robbed jeepney passengers on their way to work in Pasay City, taking them blind of close to P40,000 worth of valuables yesterday morning in Pasay City.

The holdup men, whose attack included the jeepney driver later dropped off their victims on Roxas Boulevard as they fled with their loot in the public service vehicle (TXT 204) plying the Dewinda-Pasay Rotonda route.

Chief Insp. Jury Guiberth, Pasay City Police station investigation and detective management section head, said the robbery happened between 5 a.m. and 6 a.m. yesterday on Park Avenue, Barangay 13, Zone 4.

Three of the victims told the police that they were on their jeepney separately, 10 people were already on board, including the driver.

Change in route

They added that instead of driving straight through Taft Avenue, the driver of the passenger jeepney turned right on Libertad Street and then straight on to Park Avenue.

It was then, police said, that the jeepney driver announced the heist and ordered all the passengers to close their eyes while instructing them to fork over all their valuables.

One of the victims said the loot totaled P5,000 in cash, a digital camera worth P7,000, a wristwatch valued at P3,000 and two cell phones worth P5,000.

A worker of a fast-food restaurant told the police that he was robbed of P5,000 in cash, a cell phone worth P1,500 and a silver bracelet valued at P4,500 and a P1,200 wristwatch. He said the holdup men also made off with his uniform.

Another victim said she lost a cell phone worth P4,900.

After their valuables were taken from them, the victims were ordered to get out of the passenger jeepney on the northbound lane of Roxas Boulevard in front of the Department of Foreign Affairs office.

The jeepney driver then drove off toward the Skyway-Expressway toward Manila.

Barangay officials found the victims and accompanied them to the Pasay City Police-Only three of the seven victims, however, formally filed a robbery complaint before the police.

Guiberth said they were conducting follow-up operations for the arrest of the robbers as well as the recovery of the stolen items.

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Shorter hours for LRT, MRT

From page A20

dustry will tighten security measures to ensure a safe and convenient journey for all holiday makers during the Christmas break," it said in a statement.

It added that on Dec. 24, the last train for LRT Line 1 will leave Baclaran station at 8 p.m. On the southbound side, the last train from Roosevelt station will also leave at 8 p.m.

For LRT Line 2, the last northbound train will leave Recto station at 8:30 p.m. while on the eastbound lane, the last train from Santolan station will depart at 8 p.m.

On Dec. 31, New Year's Eve, the last trains of both lines will leave an hour earlier. The normal train schedules will be observed on all other days.

For Metro Rail Transit (MRT) commuters, the last southbound train will leave Taft Avenue station at 9 p.m. while the last northbound train from North Avenue station will depart at 8:30 p.m. on both Dec. 24 and 31.

Meanwhile, LRT administrator Rafael Rodriguez apologized to passengers who will be asked to open their wrapped Christmas gifts as security personnel have been instructed to strictly implement the "no inspection, no entry" policy.

Antipolo mayor orders probe of wall collapse

By Kristine Felicia Marquina

THE ANTIPOLO City government has ordered an investigation into the collapse of a perimeter wall that fell on a small van Wednesday, killed one person and injured five others to determine if the contractor should be held accountable for the tragedy.

Mar Collantes, administrative officer of the Public Information Office, told the Inquirer in a statement from the City Engineering Office had been sent to check if Bonta, a building contractor, had been negligent in installing the necessary safety measures, and should be held liable for the death of Allan Pintacho, and for injuries sustained by five other workers on the site.

Pintacho, together with Crispin Bonta, 50; John Arlen Caparas, 19; Dexter Anthony Aguilo, 28; Anthony Mark Gonzaga, 19; and a 17-year-old laborer, were digging the foundation for a commercial billboard to be built on Marcos Highway around 5 a.m., when the wall beside nearby 888 Hardware collapsed on them.

Pintacho was declared dead on arrival at the hospital.

The others were rushed to Antipolo Medical Center, but have since been transferred to another medical facility, according to Joey Blanco, officer in charge of the City District Risk Reduction Office.

The exact source of the local government would depend on the results of the engineering department's technical assessment report.

"If the report says the contractor should be held liable for negligence, the local government will assess the family in filing the appropriate charges should they decide to do this," Blanco said.

Expenses

He added that Bonta had, on his own, paying for the medical bills of the three workers.

The contractor also took care of Pintacho's burial expenses.

Meanwhile, in a statement, Bishop Nilo Leyble said the local government would also provide assistance to the victims' families.

"The local government of Antipolo is doing all it can to help the victims. Although the building is a private project, the city government is ready to help them," Leyble said.

In the meantime, Mayor said construction activities in the area have been stopped.

THE NOSE of an LB ambulance rests against the side of a house, one of several it demolished after the vehicle's brakes failed as it was running on Barangay Highway, Antipolo City. AUDREY MORALES

8 dead, 12 hurt in road mishap

From page A20

lotion, 26; Angelina Jaime, 64; Nicasil Dalmacio, 9; Evelyn Palomera, 44; Melvin Hising, 23; Bartonette Asis; Catherine Fuentes, 50; Maita Bellardita, 61; Elpidio Balmoria, John Carlo Corpuz Reyes, 1; and Lorian Constantino Ebuenga, 30.

According to Pelayo, most were riders of the passenger jeepney, except for the Mendozas.

Of the 12, 10 were rushed to Amang Memorial Medical Center in Marikina City for treatment. The rest were taken to Antipolo Medical Center.

Philippine Red Cross officials who rushed to the scene said most of them suffered injuries in the head, legs and hips.

Meanwhile, in a statement, Bishop Nilo Leyble said that he had instructed the City Social Welfare and Development Office to provide aid to the victims.

Kim successor moves fast to consolidate power

SEOUL, South Korea—The leadership of North Korea moved swiftly Wednesday in putting Kim Jong-un, thrust into the international spotlight after the death of his father, as the country's unchallenged ruler.

With the military's allegiance a crucial question in the new leader's success in consolidating power, North Korean television showed senior military leaders saluting the young Kim on Wednesday as he received messages at the Kumsusan memorial here, where Kim Jong-il lay in state inside a glass case for public viewing. State television repeatedly broadcast images of senior military leaders pledging their fealty to the son.

In South Korea, the National Intelligence Service reported to the National Assembly that shortly after Kim's death was announced Monday, North Korean troops canceled their field training and returned to their barracks on high alert, according to lawmakers who attended the agency's closed-door briefing. The order to return to the barracks was given under the name of Kim Jong-un and was issued before his father's death was announced, an indication that he was in control of the North's 1.2 million-strong military, the South's national news agency Yonhap reported Wednesday, quoting an intelligence-service source.

The spy agency also told the Assembly that it might see tensions to establish his leadership credentials. The military was considered the most resistant to the idea of giving away the North's nuclear weapons in return for outside aid.

If Kim Jong-un, believed to be in his 20s, is not able to consolidate power, he may become the figurehead of a collective leadership where the military and his uncle would emerge as power brokers, Jang Song Thaek, 65, the brother-in-law of Kim Jong-il, grew influential under Kim's rule and was often cited as a possible regent for Kim Jong-un.

Meanwhile, on Wednesday the United States and South Korea made cautious overtures to the North. Despite longstanding tensions over the North's ongoing and its nuclear weapons program, both appeared focused on avoiding provocations during a delicate transition of power, signaling their readiness to engage with the emerging leadership when it was ready. Still, there were signs of sympathy have been observed in the North Korean people, not the government.

South announced Wednesday that private organizations and individuals would be able to mail or his condolences over the death of Kim Jong-il, the South Korean leader whose death was announced on Monday, including a handwritten message from the late President Roh Moo-hyun, who held a summit meeting with Kim in 2007. That move will fill a diplomatic gap left open by the South's decision not to send a government delegation to Kim's funeral, as will its decision to allow attendance by surviving family members of major South Korean backers of reconciliation with the North: former President Kim Dae-jung and Hyundai chairman Chung Mong-hun.

The State Department said US officials had met North Korean diplomats at the United Nations in New York to coordinate discussions opened by Bo. Jong has made over possible food aid for the North, though nothing candidate was expected immediately. New York Times News Service

MOURNERS of the Korean People's Army crying for late North Korean leader Kim Jong-il at Pyongyang (left) as anointed heir Kim Jong-un grimaces in pain.

WikiLeaks military hearing ending

MANNING

FORT MEADE, Maryland—Pfc. Bradley Manning's preliminary hearing is ending but it could be weeks before an Army intelligence analyst hears whether he will be court-martialed for what legedly revealing the biggest national security leak in U.S. history.

Prosecutors and defense attorneys were set to make closing arguments Thursday, the seventh day of Manning's hearing. Presiding officer Lt. Col. Paul Almanza then will have until Jan. 16 to recommend whether the 24-year-old should stand trial for aiding the enemy and 21 other charges.

Military officials say Almanza's timeline could be extended, and there is no deadline for a final decision by Maj. Gen. Michael Linnington, commander of the Military District of Washington.

The standard of proof is whether reasonable grounds exist to believe Manning committed the alleged offenses.

It's been nearly 19 months since Manning was charged with giving to the anti-secrecy website WikiLeaks a trove of classified data, including hundreds of thousands of State Department diplomatic cables and raw battlefield reports from Iraq and Afghanistan, and video of a laughing US helicopter crew gunning down 11 men, including a Reuters cameraman and his driver, in a city Manning's intelligence consumer than security had been tightened in major cities across the country. But it also predicted that the Central Military Commission of the Workers' Party to which Kim Jong-un was appointed an vice chairman last year, will never as "an iron-fisted ruling agency" could be consolidated his power. He has yet to assume the two top jobs his father, Kim Jong-il, held: general secretary of the party and chairman of the National Defense Commission.

Analysts said that the rush to establish the young Kim's leadership, while the nation was still grieving over his father's death, was a signal of his vulnerability.

"When Kim Il-sung died, talking about Kim Jong-Il's succession, while the country was preoccupied in mourning was considered sacrilegious," said Choi Jin-wook, an analyst at the Korea Institute for National Unification in Seoul.

The first thing Kim Jong-il did when he succeeded his father's position as chief last year was to give him two powerful military titles four-star general and vice chairman of the General Military Commission of the ruling Workers' Party. But his control over the hard-line People's Army, whose influence has grown under his father's reign, remains, as "military first" policy, remains untested, and some

Wikileaks dubbed "Collateral Murder."

The reason Manning allegedly gave for the disclosures, in online chats with a confidant who turned him in: "I want people to see the truth."

His lawyers are building a three-pronged defense: Manning was a troubled man who shouldn't have had access to classified material, let alone served in Iraq; security at his workplace was weak, and the published material did little or no harm to national security.

The prosecution's three main witnesses were, like Manning, computer experts.

Adrian Lamo, a onetime convicted hacker, testified he gave investigators records of his Jan. 22 IC online chats with a correspondent using the screen name "bradass87" who spoke about engineering "possibly the largest data spillage in resources history" from his dump point in Baghdad.

Two computer forensic examiners said they found evidence on Manning's workplace computer and removable media. Army and Afghanistan, and video of a laughing US helicopter crew gunning down 11 men, including a Reuters cameraman and his driver, in a city

Scientists fight back in 'mutant bird flu' row

PARIS—Leading virologists on Wednesday warned of censorship after a US biosecurity watchdog asked scientific journals to withhold details of lab work that created a mutant strain of bird flu.

The controversy erupted on Tuesday when the US National Science Advisory Board for Biosecurity (NSABB) urged the world's two top journals to exclude key details before publishing the research papers.

Its refusal is believed to be the first time it has made the recommendation, the government monitor cited an "extremely serious global health threat." As the US-published Science and its counterpart in London, Nature, mulled the request, some experts said the NSABB request was an over-reaction.

Others said it could set a worrying precedent for the free flow of information—a vital component in scientific advances.

"It's going to sully scientific communication if, for spurious reasons about biological warfare, little groups of self-appointed guardians start meeting," said John Oxford, a professor at Lincoln Queen Mary's School of Medicine and Dentistry.

"I know they call it 'redacted' or some such, but it's pure censorship," he said in an interview with AFP.

"It's censorship of a high level, and if that starts creeping into the scientific arena, we will not know where we are."

In a blog, Vincent Racaniello, a professor of microbiology at Columbia University Medical Center in New York, said, "this is a hard day for virology, and for science in general."

"The decision by the NSABB sets a precedent for removing future experimental results whose wide dissemination would benefit, not harm, humanity."

Sparking the storm were a paper submitted to Science by a team led by Ron Fouchier at the Erasmus Medical Center in Rotterdam, and another sent to Nature by virologists led by Yoshihiro Kawaoka of the University of Wisconsin and the University of Tokyo, which reportedly showed the same result.

Both teams of scientists created a more dangerous form of the H5N1 influenza virus in the goal of figuring out what makes the avian pathogen tick.

Circulating among poultry, H5N1 leapt to humans in 1997, killing more than one in every two people that is infected.

Even though the virus was extremely lethal, it was not very contagious. It lodged up in the bottom of the lungs rather than the upper airways, where virus-es are spread by sneezing and coughing.

As a result, there have been only 573 documented cases of H5N1, although 336 have been fatal, according to the UN's World Health Organization (WHO).

The lab-made pathogen reportedly swept away the main airway controls of H5N1's lethality versus spreadability balance.

Tested on ferrets, it turned out to be both deadly and contagious. Then much, though, has not emerged.

NSABB chair Paul Bates, a microbial geneticist, said the AAAS Science leader report last month that he had huge concerns.

"I won't think of another pathogenetic organism that is as nasty as this one," Amin was quoted as saying. "I don't think anthrax is as nasty at all compared to this." AFP

Coordinated bombings kill 57 in crisis-mired Iraq

BAGHDAD—A wave of attacks in Baghdad Thursday killed 57 people as Iraq faced a political crisis, with its vice president accused of ordering death squads and the country's worst Iraq he could break off power-sharing.

The apparently coordinated blasts, which left 176 people wounded, were the first major sign of violence in a crisis that has threatened the country's fragile political truce and heightened sectarian tensions just days after US forces completed their withdrawal from Iraq.

The attacks, the deadliest in more than four months, largely coincided with the morning rush hour, and security forces continued off bomb sites, AFP correspondents and officials said.

Two army helicopters could be heard hovering overhead as many of the blast sites and emergency response vehicles rushed to the scene of attacks, while right-wing security checkpoints recovered Baghdad's already choking traffic.

The attacks came in the Alhael, Bab al-Moatham and Bataala districts of central Baghdad, the Adhamiyah, Shoula and Shaab neighborhoods in the north, Ashriyah in the east, Ghazaliyah in the west and Al-Amil and Dora in the south, the officials said.

Health ministry spokesman Jilal Dabg put the toll at 57 dead and 176 wounded in 15 attacks. Baghdad security spokesman Major General Qassim Ata said there had been a dozen attacks.

Thursday's violence was the worst since August 15, when 76 people were killed and more than 200 injured in a wave of series of attacks that struck 17 Iraqi cities.

The attacks came with Iraqi politicians at loggerheads over a statement issued by the arrest of Vice President Tariq al-Hashemi, with Prime Minister Nuri al-Maliki demanding that Kurdish authorities hand over the Sunni Arab leader, who is holed up in their autonomous region. Hashemi denies the charges.

Maliki has also called for his Sunni deputy Salah al-Mutlak, who belongs in the same Iraqiya bloc as Hashemi, to be sacked after he described the Shiite-led government as a "dictatorship." Iraqiya, meanwhile, has boycotted parliament and the cabinet, and Maliki has threatened to replace their ministers in the four-old unity government. AFP

Economy a factor in slowest US population growth since '40s

By Sabrina Tavernise

WASHINGTON—The population of the United States grew at its slowest rate since the 1940s this year, the Census Bureau reported Wednesday, as the gloomy economy continued to depress births and immigrants fell to its lowest level since 1991.

The first measure of the US population in the new decade offered fresh evidence that the economic trouble that has plagued the country for the past several years continues to make its effects felt.

The population grew by 2.8 million people from April 2010 to July 2011, according to the bureau's new estimates, the annual increase, about 0.7 percent when calculated for the year that ended in July 2011, was the smallest since 1945, when the population fell by 0.3 percent in the last year of World War II.

"The nation's overall growth rate is now at its lowest point since before the baby boom," the Census Bureau director, Robert M. Groves, said in a statement.

The sluggish pace puts the country "in a place we haven't been in a very long time," said William H. Frey, senior demographer at the Brookings Institution. "We don't have that vibrancy that fueled the economy and people's sense of mobility," he said. "People are a little stifled right now."

Underlying the modest growth was an immigration level that was the lowest in 20 years. The net increase of immigrants to the US for the year ended in July was an estimated 700,000, the smallest since 1991, Frey said, when the immigrant were that came to the 1970s began to pick up pace. It peaked in 2001, when the net increase of immigrants was 1.1 million, and was still above 1 million in 2006. But it slowed substantially when the housing market collapsed, and the jobs associated with it boom that were popular among immigrants, disappeared.

"Net immigration from Mexico is close to zero, and we haven't seen that in at least 40 years," said Jeffrey S. Passel, senior demographer at the Pew Hispanic Center. "We are in a very different kind of immigration situation."

Passel said that the bulk of the reduction in recent years had been among illegal immigrants, adding that apprehensions at the border are just 20 percent of what they were a decade ago. (The Census Bureau does not ask foreign born residents their status, but Passel believes the count includes most people here illegally.)

A lagging birth rate also contributed. Births in the US declined precipitously during the recession and its aftermath, down by 7.3 percent from 2007 to 2010, according to Stateth M. Johnson, the senior demographer in the Carsey Institute at the University of New Hampshire. There were slightly over 4 million births in the year that ended in July the fewest since 1999.

Economic trauma tends to depress births. In the Great Depression, the birth rate fell by a third, Johnson said. It is unclear whether the current dip means that births are being delayed or that they are foregone, as they were in the Depression, he said.

In a particularly striking measure of economic distress, birth rates among Hispanics, who were concentrated in states hardest hit by the recession—Arizona, like Florida and Arizona, declined by 17 percent from 2007 to 2010, Johnson said. That is compared with a 6.8 percent decline for whites and a 6.7 percent decline for blacks. Rates dropped most sharply among young Hispanic, down by 23 percent for women ages 20 to 24, between 2007 and 2010.

There were bright spots. Florida, which had enjoyed helpfulness in the decades of robust migration into the state reversed into net declines during the economic downturn, was starting to recover. After net losses of foreigners in 2009 and 2009, the state had a net gain of 106,000 newcomers in the year ending in July, Frey said, the highest since 2006 and a signal that the worst may be behind it.

Neither Arizona nor Nevada, other fast-growing states during the last decade, were so lucky. Nevada's rate of population gain in the year ending in July was about a quarter what it was in the middle of the decade, and Arizona's was about half. Johnson said. New York Times News Service

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The WORLD

Editor Lawrence B. Sunga

Syrian troops attack town, kill 160 people

BEIRUT—Syrian rights activists and opposition groups said Wednesday that forces loyal to President Bashar Assad had killed at least 160 defecting soldiers, civilians and antigovernment activists over the last three days in northwestern Syria. If confirmed, the killings would constitute one of the worst spasms of violence in the nine-month old uprising.

Word of the killings, which the activists and opposition groups said had taken place near the city of Idlib near the Turkish border, was reported as they both to observers from the Arab League as new violence in Syria in the run-up to another pledge by Assad's government to withdraw its troops from besieged areas.

Some activists said Assad's forces had intensified a campaign of deadly violence and intimidation purely because the impending arrival of Arab League monitors may prevent such action in coming days. "I fear the security forces may be trying to crush this thing before the monitors get in," said Mashal Jourjah, a member of the Syrian National Council, an opposition group.

The Syrian government, which has sought to characterize the anti-Assad uprising as a Western-backed insurrection by terrorist groups and thugs, has not commented on reports of the killings. But the official Syrian Arab News Agency said on its website that Syrian authorities in the cities of Idlib, Homs and Hama had "arrested dozens of armed terrorist groups, arresting tens of wanted men who committed crimes of killing, attacked and kidnapped persons and public properties."

The agency said "a number of the terrorists have been killed and others wounded," and that "big quantities of weapons, ammunitions, explosives and night goggles in addition to modern communications sets have been seized."

It was impossible to corroborate the conflicting assessments because of restrictions on foreign press access in Syria, where, according to a UN estimate, more than 5,000 people have been killed since March. But in a statement, the secretary general of the Arab League, Nabil al-Arabiy suggested the reports by the opposition groups were credible, expressing concern about them and urging the Syrian government to "protect civilians."

The Obama administration, which has become increasingly critical of Assad and his ruthless forces since protests first gave evidence to the new opposition episode of killings, last summer, the White House said it was "deeply disturbed" by those reports.

"While Syrian security forces have also taken casualties, the overwhelming majority of the violence and loss of life in Syria stems from the actions of the Assad regime, and we call on all parties to put an end to it," release," the statement said.

Activists said the Syrian military forces, using helicopters, tanks and artillery, were continuing their crackdown on Wednesday.

The 22-member Arab League, a historically parliamentary body, shielded the Syrian regime more than three weeks ago by condemning Assad's harsh repression of the political opposition movement there and threatening harsh economic sanctions if he did not withdraw troops to their barracks within a few days ago to allow Arab League monitors to visit.

Some of his opponents have voiced strong doubts about the observers' mission, saying that the Syrian government would find ways to keep the monitors from sites of violence.

New York Times News Service

A most fantastic way to end the year with

EastWest Bank's Dream Win Big

RAFFLE PROMO

In hindsight, dreams of acquiring a free first-class condominium unit or a swanky sports car seem far-fetched. But thanks to EastWest Bank's 'Dream Big Win Big' raffle promo, owning at least one of those outstanding prizes is completely possible.

Running from October 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012, this promo offers EastWest Bank clients a great opportunity to receive monthly chances when they can win top-of-the-line gadgets before the ultimate grand draw happening on March 31, 2012.

On that glorious day, five of those dream prizes will be given away: a one-bedroom condominium unit with parking space at the Brandl at the Bonifacio Global City; two Mini Cooper Boys cars (the 1.598-brake grade and the 1.6DG); and up to P1.7 million in cash prizes. All of these prizes are already lined up by EastWest and may be yours for the taking.

The Brandl condominium, one of the premium prizes up for grabs, is a one-of-a-kind establishment located in the renowned Bonifacio Global City. Living in Brandl is an inspiring and excellent facilities. In addition to being pleasing to the eyes – as well as all senses, it Brandl is and can become your haven for ultimate relaxation and comfort. Looking out your window will enable you to soak in spectacular views of the Manila Golf and Country Club and the Bonifacio City Center. With only four units per floor, you can be assured of abundant space and privacy from adjacent units. Whether you are alone or with your family and friends, your lifestyle at Brandl will be a consistently pleasant experience. As Filinvest Development Corporation's flagship project under the Filinvest Premium brand, the Brandl also showcases and embodies living in a whole new level.

Also two premium prizes at stake are the C180 Avant Garde and the S300 edition of Mercedes-Benz, one of the most luxurious automobile brands in the world. The Mercedes-Benz C-Class and S-Class, both of European heritage, guarantee high-quality service in all aspects. Highlighting opportunity and performance, these models promote style, power, safety, comfort, and efficiency simultaneously, resulting in automatic emotions from those lucky few who experience driving these cars. Once you step in a C-Class or an S-Class, you will experience not only a thrill from the smooth gliding through the roads, but also convenience from the built-in systems designed to enhance your ride.

Looking yourself a chance to own one of these lavish prizes is simple. EastWest Bank offers a number of ways to earn raffle points as a way of you grabbing your dream prize. Options for accumulating points are the following:

- **Target exclusive to win the monthly and grand draws. EastWest Bank Credit Cardholders should activate their new cards and spend at least P1,000.**
- **Bank personal, mortgage or auto loans with loan amounts of P10,000, P100,000 and P500,000, respectively.**
- **Debit or prepaid cardholders can earn one raffle point for every P500 worth of total checkout purchases.**
- **Interest banking users can earn one raffle point for every accumulated payment of P2,500.**
- **Deposition relocations and maintain their month-to-date average daily balance by P50,000 earn one raffle point.**

Note that clients can collect raffle points on top of their regular investment returns every time they reach the minimum required fund to earn raffle points.

As evident of this raffle prizes, EastWest Bank steps too to its tagline, "You Deserve Ian Force." Take advantage of this amazing opportunity and go for the prize of your reservations. If you need more information, visit any of EastWest's 122 branches nationwide, check out www.eastwestbanker.com, or call its 24-hour Customer Service Hotline 888-1700.

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ALI in talks over 'Plastic City' dev't deal

By Doris C. Dumlao

AYALA Land Inc. is in talks with the Gatchalian group for a potential investment in the latter's 60-hectare "Plastic City" estate in Valenzuela City.

The Gatchalian group hopes to redevelop the sprawling northern Metro Manila estate into a mixed-use urban complex.

According to industry sources, two publicly listed companies controlled by the Gatchalians may be involved in this prospective deal with the Ayala-led Bellaire Industries Inc. (NEB) and Philippine Bronco Corp. (PHES).

PHES owns Plastics City while PHES is a property development arm of the Gatchalians.

"We are in preliminary talks with a few companies and developers. Ayala Land is just one of them," the Gatchalian group said, it stressed that nothing has been finalized yet.

Ayala Land also said there was nothing official yet but indicated that talks were ongoing.

"Given the expansion efforts, ALI has been in talks with various groups for prospective land acquisition," a spokesperson from ALI said.

MPI is now trading near its 52-week high of P0.28. Yesterday, its share price dipped by 1.2 percent to P0.24 at closing.

PHES, on the other hand, was among the day's top gainers when its share price surged by 18.42 percent to P0.139 per share.

Plastic City Industrial Corp. (PCIC), a subsidiary of MPI, has long owned its plastic manufacturing and commercial operations due to losses.

PCIC subsidiaries decided to lease out its warehouse and building facilities in the estates.

While the Ayalas are to search for new areas of growth, the Gatchalians are trying to unlock the value of its huge estate in Valenzuela City, hoping

Gatchalians seek to unlock value of Valenzuela estate

(B1-1)

PH loses WTO alcohol bid, urged to open market

WASHINGTON—The United States Wednesday urged the Philippines to swiftly open its market to US alcohol products like Jack Daniel's and Jim Beam by eliminating a discriminatory tax system struck down by the World Trade Organization.

"This is an important victory for American distilled spirits producers and workers... We urge the Philippine government to comply quickly," US Trade Representative Ron Kirk said in a statement after a WTO appellate body ruling.

The United States and the European Union, in separate cases filed several years ago at the WTO, complained the Philippines had violated global trade rules by taxing foreign alcoholic beverages at rates 10 to 40 times higher than brands made in the Philippines from home-grown materials such as cane and palm sugar.

Global trade rules generally bar countries from discriminating against imported products in favor of domestic ones.

The European Union and United States are the world's No. 1 and No. 2 exporters of distilled spirits, but have been all but shut out of the Philippines, one of the largest markets for alcohol in the Asia-Pacific region.

A WTO dispute settlement panel sided with the consultation trade partners in August and the WTO appellate body upheld the decision Wednesday.

The Philippines now has 30 days to say how it plans to comply with the ruling, a US official said.

The victory is expected to help US producers like Brown-Forman and Beam Inc. break into the $1.4 billion Philippines spirits market.

Brown-Forman, based in Louisville, Kentucky, owns the Jack Daniel's brand, and Beam, headquartered in Deerfield, Illinois, produces Jim Beam whiskey.

Peter Cressy, president of the Distilled Spirits Council of the United States, urged the Philippines to put in place "a fair, non-discriminatory excise tax system."

He described the current tax regime as "a textbook case of discrimination against imported products."

Reuters

INDICATORS

PESO-DOLLAR RATE
Dec. 22, 2011
43.640

STOCK MARKET
Dec. 22, 2011
1.58

(See stock market report on Page B3)

Shares close higher

LOCAL shares gained yesterday, closed marginally higher on late-session buying interest but the profit-taking that took place earlier, keeping the main index afloat for the fifth straight day.

The Philippine Stock Exchange index gained 1.58 points, or 0.04 percent, to finish at 4,375.46 in mixed trading.

Modest gains by the industrial, holding firms and mining/oil counters made up

(B1-4)

Nido, French firm to hold joint study of PECR 4 areas

Technical, commercial evaluation to cover 15 blocks

By Amy R. Borja

ALSTOM LIBIS Nido Petroleum Ltd. and Total E&P Australia Philippines of France have forged an agreement to conduct a joint evaluation of the oil and gas exploration acreage offered to investors under Philippine Energy Contracting Round 4.

In a regulatory filing, Nido Petroleum chief executive officer Al Emmanuel de Jesus said the joint study and bid agreement (JSBA) allowed Nido, in behalf of its partner Total, to undertake technical and commercial evaluations of all the 15 prospective petroleum blocks.

Nido Petroleum has a 36 percent interest in the JSBA while the remaining 75 percent will be held by Total.

"We are very pleased to be partnering with Total for the PECR 4 bid round and look forward to working with Total for this project," stated Jon Ferrillo, head of exploration for Nido Petroleum.

The JSBA will allow both parties to choose which among the areas offered by the Philippine government will fit their respective petroleum exploration portfolios.

"PECR 4 is the first release of new acreage by the Philippines' Department of Energy for a number of years and offers a diverse range of exploration potential across multiple basins, providing Nido with the opportunity to augment its exploration asset base in the Philippines," Ferrillo said.

Interested companies are required to submit their respective bids for the petroleum blocks they are interested in between April and July 2013. Awarding of the contracts to explore and develop these blocks was slated for the second half of 2013.

The PECR 4, which was launched on June 30, is envisioned to address the Philippines' energy supply concern through the exploration of local indigenous resources. Harnessing local resources is expected to help the country meet its daily demand and reduce its dependence on imported petroleum products.

The DOE said it was expecting at least $73 billion worth of investments from the PECR 4 areas. Based on the local oil and gas assets over the next several years, should all the 15 contracts be awarded.

The amount approximates the minimum investments required during the exploration stage, Energy Secretary Jose Rene D. Almendras earlier said.

During the exploration stage, companies will be drilling three to five wells. Bigger investments would be needed if these companies would decided to push through with their petroleum projects.

The 15 areas being offered are located in Cagayan, Central Luzon, Northwest Palawan, Mindoro-Cuyo, East Palawan, Cotabato and the Sulu Sea.

According to the DOE, nine out of the 15 areas were envisioned to be holding as much as 1.46 billion barrels of oil and 20 trillion cubic feet of gas.

Smile, it's almost Christmas

IT'S TWO days before Christmas and I think we have entered the right to temporarily forget the worries of daily life and look forward to a restful holiday. Let's liven up the seventies with some jokes I downloaded from the Internet.

* * *

A businessman and a lawyer were fishing in the Caribbean. Attempting to strike up a conversation, the lawyer said, "I'm here because my house burned down and everything I owned was destroyed in the fire. My insurance paid for everything."

"What a coincidence," said the businessman. "I'm here because my house and all of my belongings were destroyed by a flood. Fortunately, my insurance company paid for everything too."

Sensing an untapped opportunity, the lawyer asked, "How do you start a flood?"

* * *

Question: How do you keep your husband from reading your e-mail?

Answer: Rename the e-mail folder "Instruction Manual."

* * *

Announcement on a university pop quiz system:

"For students who parked their cars on the driveway please move them."

Announcement after 20 minutes:

"The 200 students who went to move your cars, please return to your respective classes."

* * *

An accountant visited the Natural History museum. While standing near the dinosaur he said to the person beside him, "This dinosaur is two billion years and 16 months old."

"Where did you get the exact information?"

"I was here 16 months ago, and the guide told me that the dinosaur is two billion years old."

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PAL sees brighter prospects ahead

By Paolo G. Montecillo

PHILIPPINE AIRLINES (PAL) believes that the people's confidence in the flag carrier has returned, boosting its prospects in the coming year.

Operations have already returned to normal in time for the holidays, usually one of the busiest times of the year for local airlines, the company's president said.

The airline of tycoon Lucio Tan said that the public's mental memories of its "42 days of Chaos near" ticket sale dictated that passengers were no longer concerned about flight disruptions that plagued PAL's operations in the last 12 months.

Terrible name in a local law supporting school, PAL was forced to cancel all flights for an entire day when workers staged a "wildcat strike," to protest the company's plan to retrench employees.

"Thousands of holiday travelers are awaiting of the gateway fares since the promo started Dec. 14, more than a month after PAL resumed to normal operations since the labor tussle that disrupted the airline's restructuring program," the company spokesman said in a statement.

Under the 12 Days of Christmas promo, PAL is offering low priced rates for all its international and domestic destinations until Dec. 25—as low as $20 to Hong Kong, $68 to Singapore, $198 to the US or 9798 to any destination in Luzon, Travel period is from Jan. 16 to March 15. The ticket sale is on a first-come, first-served basis.

As a special treat, PAL is also giving surprise "add-ons" or "incentives, on" everyday on top of promo fares.

Daily surprise treats are announced in newspapers, the PAL website, and Facebook page. The lovely discounted, round-trip rates exclude fuel surcharges and government taxes.

Shares close higher

From page B1

for the stock in the financial, property and services counters.

Value turnover amounted to P3.54 billion, aided by selective buying by foreign investors.

There was P963 million in net foreign buying for the day.

Despite the overall index gain, there were 89 advancers against 80 decliners, while 51 stocks were unchanged.

The index stocks that helped the PSEi rise in positive territory were BDO, EDC, DMCI, SMIC, GTSE, Ayala Corp., URC and Ionics Inc.

Other stocks that gained on heavy trade are Security Bank, Lopez A (open to local investors), Lopez B (open to all investors), Basic C. Bumilao

Travelers brace for surge in Caticlan airport fees

By Paolo G. Montecillo

TERMINAL fees at Caticlan's Godofredo P. Ramos Airport, the country's gateway to tourism hotspot Boracay Island, are set to surge next month, the government announced this week.

In a notice published on Thursday, the Civil Aviation Authority of the Philippines (CAAP) said fees to be charged to travelers would be increased to P200 per passenger, from the current P75.

The increase in fees will make it easier for the facility's new operator, San Miguel Holdings Corp., to recoup money it has spent and will continue to spend to develop the airport.

San Miguel Holdings, a unit of conglomerate San Miguel Corp., owns 95 percent of Tunay Ang Development Holdings Corp. (TADHC), the company that holds the 25-year contract to rehabilitate and operate the Caticlan airport.

Proceeds from the collection will help pay for the P800 million the company is expected to spend to refurbish the Caticlan Airport.

The first stage of airport improvements was unveiled last June.

San Miguel Holdings is in the process of acquiring terminal facilities and expanding the airport's limited runway, which today can only accommodate small aircraft.

In a previous disclosure, San Miguel Holdings said its concession agreement would be valid until 2034.

The increase to P200 will only be the first of several adjustments.

By 2014, the company plans to hike fees to P500 per passenger.

"All the increases are limited to a maximum equivalent to the terminal fees at Manila's Ninoy Aquino International Airport," the company said.

San Miguel earlier acquired the company that runs the contested Cebu-to-Bar Caticlan airport from businessman George Ty Tong.

Due to the increasing popularity of Boracay as a tourist destination, the Caticlan airport has experienced rapid growth in passenger volumes over the last decade.

About 700,000 tourists pass through Caticlan airport each year.

Boracay Island, which is less than an hour by boat from Caticlan, is considered to be one of the Philippines' top tourist draws.

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ALI in talks over 'Plastic City' dev't deal

From page B1

to build a commercial and residential complex on its property.

The development plan includes an old-fashioned complex meant to be something like a small version of the BF Industrials in Quezon City.

The proposed redevelopment plan includes the conversion of office space to allied business process outsourcing companies. The group is banking on expectations that more BPO businesses will move away from the main central business districts.

Under the proposed plan, a new hospital may be put up to serve residents of Dahlanda City.

Also, townhouses and condominium units for different market segments may also be put up in the residential portion of the estate.

Manny Cruz of Jardine Equities said the Ayala group held a meeting with them that it would like to display, as suggested by its sister unit the toll road business of, for winning the bidding for the Daang Hari-Skyway project.

In particular, Cruz said, ALI is trying to secure the bus terminal, huge parcels of land with in the metropolis or its environs.

"That could be in line with its foray in low- to middle-end market, where developers see a huge building in demand. Most property developers see a thing down from exposure to high-end residential development in expectation of a glut ratio in the next two to three years. They are shifting towards suburban development which is easier to sell," Cruz said.

Metrowide is an industrial city and serves as the northern gateway to Metro Manila, being two major highways—traversing through Macarthur Highway and the North Luzon Expressway.

In 2011, the World Bank and the International Finance Corp. ranked Iloilo City among the "Most Business Friendly" cities in the Philippines. It ranked 4th highest in the "ease of starting a business" and tied in the ease of regulatory approvals.

PEZA of the Cavitelandian group developed Peza of the Ortigas Town in Manila, MetroTech Industrial Park and Pacific Grand Residences, both in Valenzuela City, and Manila Grand Villas and Pacific Grand Townhouses in Cebu.

Power Situation Outlook
for Friday, 23 December 2011

	Luzon	Visayas	Mindanao
Available Capacity (MW)	7,788	1,731	1,235
System Peak (MW)	6,734	1,361	1,224
Gross Reserve (MW)	1,035	344	111

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"Investments" in Variable Life Insurance Contracts	PRU LIFE UK I? Dec. 31, 2010	Dec. 30, 2011
Bond Fund - Peso	2.1870	2.1038
Managed Fund - Peso	2.0278	2.0402
Equity Fund - Peso	2.0981	1.8778
Equity Fund - PP Peso	2.0981	1.8778
Bond Fund - PP Peso	2.0750	2.0041
Balanced Mixed Fund I	1.8974	1.8308
Balanced Mixed Fund II	1.8974	1.8308
Protective Fund - Peso	1.7486	1.7499
Money Market Fund - Peso	1.6408	1.6487

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Normal operations will resume on January 2, 2012.

BUSINESS

DOE issues vital guidelines on use of PH ethanol

Gov't move seen to provide critical boost for ailing industry

By Amy R. Remo

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy has finally issued the much awaited guidelines for the use of locally produced ethanol, a move that is expected to provide a vital boost for the ailing industry.

The department circular published yesterday mentioned provisions that would ensure that all ethanol produced in the country would be purchased prior to the purchase of cheaper ethanol abroad.

It likewise states the obligations of concerned stakeholders, namely the biofuel producers, oil companies, the National Biofuels Board, and the DOE's Renewable Energy Management and Oil Industry Management Bureaus.

More importantly, the circular also appointed the NBB to "publish a monthly price index for biodiesel every first day of the month based on data from the Sugar Regulatory Administration and Department of Agriculture to determine the reasonableness of the price of locally produced biodiesel."

In a phone interview, Romancie S. Gunuco of the planning and policy department of the BIR, explained that the monthly price index would become the official reference or basis for price and supply negotiations between oil companies and ethanol producers.

Starting in August this year, oil companies were mandated to produce gasoline with 10 percent ethanol, with exemptions for the higher and lower octane gasoline. The full implementation of this 10-percent blend will be implemented in February 2012.

The committee period given to all concerned stakeholders of the local ethanol industry would allow them to increase ethanol supply and firm up the necessary agreements for the mandated blending.

Lucky customer Helen Ofon (third from right) receives the key to a brand new Nissan X-TRAIL CVT from Nissan Nicas Wangon Alabang representatives (from left) General Manager Carlo Montemayor, Group Manager Edwin Indragan, Sales Agent Erwin Pernia, Service Manager Elton Hipolito (rearmost right).

Lucky Customer Wins Nissan X-TRAIL CVT in SM Appliance promo

As an early Christmas gift, Nissan Nicas Philippines, Inc. (NNPI) recently gave away a brand new Nissan X-TRAIL CVT for the grand prize winner of SM Appliance Center's "Shop, Win and Ride" promo.

Winning an all-new X-TRAIL CVT 2.0L was Helen Ofon of Parang, Marikina City, chosen from hundreds of SM Appliance Center customers who purchased items from June to August this year.

Every P1,000 single or consolidated purchase from any SM Appliance center branch entitled customers with a raffle coupon. Chances of winning were tripled when customers used their BPI credit card. Apart from the X-TRAIL CVT, prizes at stake were 10 OS XVI underwater cameras, 15 40" Sony Internet TVs.

Recently heralded as the 2011 LMCE Autobest People's Choice in Compact SUV, the new X-TRAIL CVT combines functionality, comfort, and style to give the total value product fit to the Filipino motorists' lifestyle. It is the market's best-priced, yet balanced lifestyle – consumers who want best-of-both-worlds here!

Ms. Ofon is in for a treat, as the X-TRAIL CVT offers endless possibilities when it comes to vehicle ownership. It features XTRONIC Xtronic Continuous Variable Transmission that offers a seamless "no-shift-shock" driving experience. At the heart of the vehicle is a QR25DE in-2.2L engine that produces distinctive good performance of 170 hp of power and maximum torque of 230Nm. The X-Trail CVT is packed with rich amenities that include a sharp power rear for enhanced cargo flexibility, trunk drawers, cup coolers and ultimate roofing within reach. Passenger safety is ensured with the X-Trail's Anti-Slip, High Intensity Discharge (HID) headlamps for better intensity and longer illumination, and a sturdy body concept for additional safety and protection in case of frontal crash.

(CONTINUED)

Renewable energy market seen to be in place by '12

THE DEPARTMENT of Energy expects to finally put in place the country's first Renewable Energy Market (REM) by next year, a move that is expected to further boost investments in the local clean energy industry.

Energy Undersecretary Jesulito Patricio Asirit told reporters that the establishment of the market would depend on the results of the study being conducted by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and World Bank.

Asirit explained that the USAID is providing technical assistance via the conduct of the first phase of the study on the REM. An inception report, which will contain the features of the REM, is expected to be completed soon.

The second phase meanwhile will involve the World Bank, which provided a technical grant to craft the design for the REM.

Based on initial studies, Asirit said that the government may no longer create a new and separate market for renewable energy but may only include it as another commodity to be traded through the existing wholesale electricity spot market (WESM).

The WESM is a critical mechanism for the RE industry as this will serve as a venue for the issuance, monitoring and, possibly, the trading of renewable energy certificates (RECs) which, in turn, will serve as proof of the energy companies' compliance to the Renewable Portfolio Standards (RPS).

RPS is a mechanism provided under the Renewable Energy Act of 2008, which requires electricity suppliers, power distributors to source a portion of their electricity requirements from RE sources.

Based on the draft rules, the purpose of the RPS was "to contribute to the growth of the renewable energy industry by diversifying energy supply, spur socio-economic development in rural areas, and help address environmental concerns of the country by reducing harmful emissions."

As such, Asirit stressed that the establishment of the REM must be consistent with the RPS rules.

The RPS rules must determine the fixed tariff to be paid for the electricity produced from each type of emerging renewable energy source.

Amy R. Remo

Verona: Suntrust's 'City of Love' Takes Shape in Cavite

A Philippine housing developer Suntrust Properties Inc. translates romance into reality in its newest community development in Silang, Cavite. Verona, Svalbard "la cima di amore," which translates to "the city of love," this housing project takes its inspiration from the Italian city of Verona, the setting of William Shakespeare's renowned play, "Romeo and Juliet."

The 65-hectare Verona development boasts a romantic city, features structures and edifices that bring a sense of romance to the landscape. Casa de Ladera, or "toilet's house," is Suntrust's very own sales and marketing pavilion in the project. Its design takes cues from the house of the star-crossed Capello family in Verona, which showcases a landscaped courtyard and a balcony made famous by the Shakespearean play.

Aside from the pavilion, a clock tower will emerge as another landmark in the community. Future residents will have the freedom to go up the tower and admire panoramic views of the southern Manila landmark in the north, Mt. Makiling, Laguna de Bay and the Sta. Rosa landlands in the east, the mountains of Silang in the west, and the Tagaytay mountains in the south.

Verona's romantic aesthetic extends to its residential offerings. Suntrust offers six single-detached and duplex-type homes inspired by Italian Renaissance design. Homebuyers may choose from **Graziella** ("golden hair-doll"), **Caterina** ("pure"), **Mariella** ("beloved"), **Amadea** ("to love God"), **Gisella** ("pledge") and **Fiorenza** ("blossoming"). These homes offer well-planned living space ranging from 80 to 110 square meters, giving families enough room to grow.

As with all Suntrust community projects, Verona's residential areas are seamlessly integrated with a recreational block. Amenities in the community include an Italian themed clubhouse, a nature park and bridgeway, hiking trail, swimming pool, basketball court and playhouses.

Homebuyers looking for affordability can find value for their money at Verona, with home packages starting at PM1 million. The community's residential offerings are about 30 to 70 percent more affordable than those in Tagaytay, a famous tourist destination a short drive away from Silang, and around 40 to 50 percent more affordable than the homes sold in Nuvali, Santa Rosa, Laguna.

To date, the project is proving popular with urban-based families and those that have set their sights on owning a home between Alfonso and Tagaytay. With its strategic location, Verona enjoys the benefits of a well-connected road network, close proximity to key destinations and a cool climate year-round that resembles that of Tagaytay.

For more information on the romantic Verona lifestyle, call (02) 8567913 to 19 or visit www.suntrust.com.ph.

SUNTRUST

BUSINESS

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Japan funding ₱47B worth of PH infra projects

Some cover agriculture, social components

By Riza T. Olchondra

JAPAN is funding about P46.86 billion worth of flood control, irrigation and road transport projects nationwide, according to the National Economic and Development Authority (Neda).

The projects were programmed for funding during Japan's current fiscal year, which ends on March 30, 2013.

Neda Deputy Director-General Rolando G. Tungpalan said reports on that seven projects had been "underfunded" for funding, affirming the Japanese government's "strong commitment" to support the Philippines.

Documents show that seven projects with a combined cost of about P46.08 billion will be supported by funding from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (Jica). One of the seven projects, the P6.15-billion Malitubog-Maridagao Irrigation Project Phase II of the National Irrigation Administration (NIA), covers an agricultural component (farm inputs, training and marketing assistance for farmers beneficiaries as well as post-harvest equipment) and a social component (construction of potable water supply facilities, classrooms, barangay health stations, day care centers, and farm-to-market roads).

The P4.7-billion Mindanao Sustainable Settlements Area Development Project Phase II of the Department of Agrarian Reform covers agribusiness, environmental, and social development activities in Northern Mindanao, Davao Region, and Soccsksargen.

The nearly P4.3-billion National Irrigation Sector Rehabilitation and Improvement Project of NIA, which involves the rehabilitation of irrigation facilities and support for irrigators associations, is seen to help the country attain rice self-sufficiency.

The P3.41-billion Flood Risk Management Project for Cagayan River, Tagoloan River and Imus River of the Department of Public Works and Highways (DPWH) aims to mitigate flood damage in vulnerable areas through the implementation of structural and nonstructural measures for the improvement of rivers in high risk flood prone areas and to facilitate development of the core areas in the three rivers.

The P7.93-billion Pasig Marikina River Channel Improvement Project Phase II of the DPWH aims to implement river channel improvement works along the stretch of Lower Marikina River and the remaining portions of Pasig River, which are not covered by the ongoing Phase II.

The P15.11-billion Central Luzon Link Expressway Phase I of the DPWH involves the construction of a 30.7-km four-lane expressway from Tarlac City to Cabanatuan City.

The P3.05-billion Arterial Road Bypass Project Phase II of the DPWH involves the construction of Diablo-Balagan (B and D), Plaridel Bypass (Buttao-San Rafael, Bulacan). Contract Packages B3 an d D1 are the remaining sections to complete the entire stretch of the ARBP with an aggregate length of 24.6 km and 20 bridges. The proposed road bypass, covering about 9.50 km, includes the construction of four new bridges, drainage facilities, slope stabilization works and installing of miscellaneous items.

BOOSTING KAZAKHSTAN-PH BILATERAL TRADE RELATIONS Trade Undersecretary for Industry Development and Trade Policy Group (IDTPG) Adrian Cristobal Jr. (left) receives a token from His Excellency Beimet Arzumanov (right), Ambassador of the Republic of Kazakhstan to the Philippines, during the latter's courtesy visit to the DTI. The envoy's visit aims to set directions for the Kazakhstan-Philippines bilateral trade relations by establishing Philippine-Kazakhstan Business Council.

Gov't slashes raw sugar output forecast but keeps export goal

THE PHILIPPINES lowered its estimate for 2012-2013 raw sugar output by 7 percent to 2.24 million tons due to a decline in cane acreage, the government said on Thursday.

The country, however, is keeping its target of exporting more than a fourth of its revised production estimate. The final sugar crop estimate for 2011-2012 is 2.24 million tons, but these is expected to rise, sai experts." Sugar Regulatory Administration (SRA) chief Regina Ramona Martin said. "Sugar planters are claiming that cane harvest per hectare is lower by 20 percent," she told Reuters via mobile text message, adding that harvest in some areas had been completed sooner than expected because of watered cane.

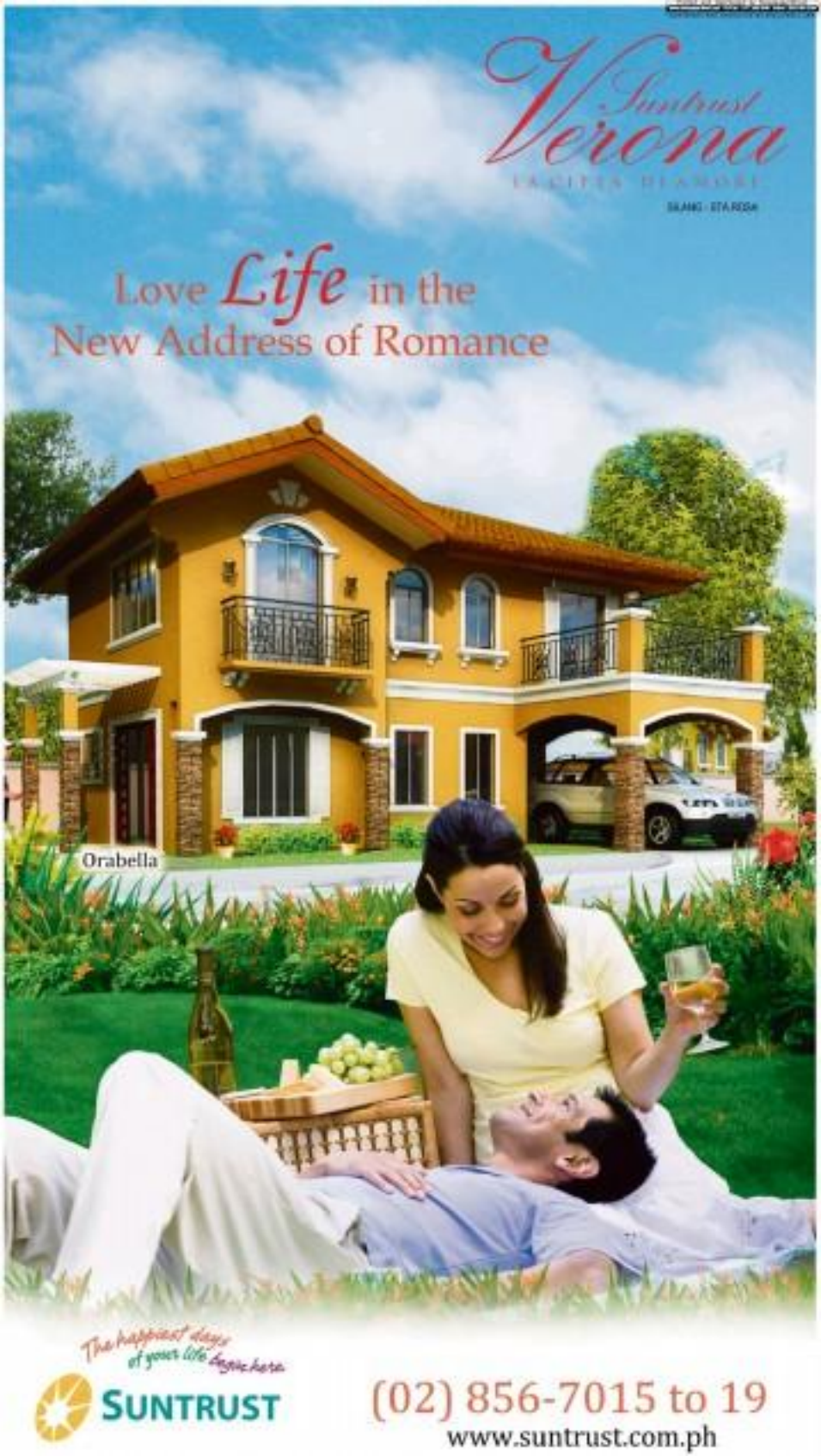
Ramona Martin said severe heavy rains and flooding triggered by tropical storm Sendong or Washi, which killed more than 1,000 people and damaged infrastructure, had "minimal" impact on sugar production in central and southern provinces.

However, the above-normal rainfall is expected to prevail particularly in the southern parts of the country, including sugar-producing provinces, with the La Niña condition forecast to persist through February next year.

The country's raw sugar output in the first quarter of the current crop year was 7% percent from a year earlier to 931,220 tons, the SRA said earlier this month.

The SRA has allowed the importation of up to 672,000 tons of raw sugar for the current crop year ending Aug. 31, 2013, or 28 percent of the earlier production estimate of 2.4 million tons.

Shipments between Sept. 1 and Nov. 28 totaled 215,900 tons, including 2,000 tons of refined sweetener. The new 2012-2013 crop estimate is 6 percent lower than last year's output of 2.39 million tons, which was the best crop in three years. REUTERS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LA CITTA' DI AMORE

THE CITY OF Love

By Charles Baleon

ITALY IS perhaps famous for its three cities: The capital Rome, formerly the seat of the most powerful empire in antiquity; Venice, famous for its canals and gondolas; and Florence, well-known for its rich history, culture and artistic heritage.

However, there is another city that also deserved inclusion. Verona, known for its ancient amphitheater where opera is still in fact performed even until today, this northern Italian city has even served as the setting for the Shakespearean tragedy of Romeo and Juliet.

"Verona was designated world heritage site by the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization for the large number of monuments dating back from antiquity, the medieval and Renaissance periods. But of course, it was through playwright William Shakespeare's immortal love story of Romeo and Juliet that Verona gained its deserved fame," described Atty. Harrison Pahingalo, president of Suntrust Properties Inc.

Enamored

In fact, Pahingalo was so enamored with the city when he visited the place a couple of years ago that he decided to make it the inspiration for a new project Suntrust Properties Inc. is developing in Silang, Cavite.

"We were thinking of what excellent theme to give our new project and the city of Verona came and it unanimous choice," remembered Pahingalo.

Suntrust Properties' Terrene La Cittá di Verona is a 62 hectares property which will have five enclaves or phases, with each one having its own concept.

"Middle-renaissance would be the central architectural design influence for the first phase of the property but we also intend to build communities featuring American, Asian and even African design influences," described Pahingalo.

City of love

The project has adopted the "Io Citta' di Amore" or the City of Love superlatives and in fact, is set to build a replica of the Italian city's famous balcony and fascia of Juliet—Casa di Giulietta—that will serve as the development's sales office.

"The edifice the centerpiece of the 2 factions area that will serve as Verona La Cittá di Amore's multipurpose area. From the architecture that will be found here, one would now expect the overall design theme of the houses that would soon rise. Pastel colored frames that feature tiled roofing and classical motifs on every section," described Pahingalo.

Apart from the Casa di Giulietta, Verona will also build Italian-themed nature park and bridgeway, a clubhouse that will feature a clock tower, swimming pool, basketball court, shops and even a library hall.

"We also worked out model houses in the Italian tradition: the 128 sq.m single detached Terrence (Blossoming), 132 sq.m single detached Cosetta (Pledge), 143 sq.m single detached Catarina (Pure), 134 sq.m single detached Chabella (Golden Beauty), 175 sq.m single detached Annalee (To love God) as well as 68 sq.m standard and premium duplex-type Arabella (Beloved)," enumerated Pahingalo.

P2 million and up

He said with the house packages' prices ranging from P2 million and up, Verona is already attracting buyers from Metro Manila as well as those who are raising the already rare chance of having a relatively affordable home halfway between the famous tourist destination of Tagaytay City and the country's most important cultural center, Metro Manila.

"Our proposition is in fact very enticing considering that our homes are still 40 to 70 percent lower than those in the Tagaytay City area and 40 to 50 percent lower than the properties sold in the Sta. Rosa-Laguna area. Verona has it all: cool yet unusual climate that is almost similar to Tagaytay, hilly topography that ensures scenic surroundings and location that is near schools, hospitals, commercial and entertainment as well as suburban parts of Sta. Rosa," said Pahingalo.

He added that for years, Suntrust Properties has provided communities that uplifted the image of the place they are located in.

"Every Filipino family dreams of owning a home within a secure and well-planned community. What we have in this particular area are unique communities that have exceeded market expectations and have become sold-out in just a few months. With homebuyers clamoring for more, Suntrust Properties gave their ever more a romantic place that honors the romance between two immortal characters, Romeo and Juliet," said Pahingalo.

For further details and inquiries, interested parties may call (02) 8367615 to 19 or visit www.suntrust.com.ph.

BUSINESS

Peso seen at 45.50 to $1 in Q1

Unlikely to buck the trend of weaker Asian currencies

By Norman V. Domingo

THE PESO is expected to trade at 45.5/$ in the dollar in the first quarter of 2012 as it fails to arrest the current of eroding liquid reserve in turn, according to DBS Group.

In its latest quarterly report on the global market outlook, the Singapore-based group said the local currency "is unlikely to buck the trend of weaker Asian currencies" next year despite a relatively strong showing this year.

"The peso has been resilient compared with many of its Asian peers ever since the European [crisis] worsening debt crisis hit the region," the financial services group said.

"This could be partly attributed to the fact the peso-dollar exchange rate did not follow its counterparts in tracking to a new low after the global financial crisis of 2008-2009," it added.

DBS said the Philippines, although not immune to the European crisis, was in a "fundamentally stronger" position compared with when it faced the global crisis three years ago.

"When the EU crisis hit the Asian region last September, the Philippines did not experience a material drop in foreign reserves like its peers," it said. "In fact, reserves recovered to a new high in [November]."

Preliminary data from the Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas show that the country's gross international reserves reached a record high of $76.3 billion as of the end of November.

The last was attributed mainly to the BSP's income from investments abroad, foreign exchange operations, foreign currency deposits and the remittances of the central bank's gold holdings.

The BSP said the reserves were equivalent to 10.7 times the country's short-term external debt based on original maturity.

"Reserves have been recording external debt since end-2010," DBS said, noting that the Philippines was working toward achieving an investment grade rating after having enjoyed sovereign debt ratings upgrades from Moody's Investors Service and Fitch Ratings last June.

"To cushion the economy from the global slowdown, the government is likely to increase fiscal spending while BSP joins other Asian countries in easing monetary policy," DBS added.

Globe grabs a Guinness!

Globe Telecom wrote up the year with a big bang as it grabs the Guinness World Records title for logging a record number of simultaneous text messages sent December 30, 2010. In 2010, consumers in the Philippines sent 1.4 billion text messages, or 3,836,712 messages per day. Globe's 24-hour text barge gift text simultaneously to the Philippines, Taiwan, Hong Kong and Singapore. Globe, which made the announcement tonight, says it broke the record set by UK-based telecommunications company Vodafone which sent 295,001 text messages within a 10-second period.

In Manila, the biggest gathering was at the World Trade Center in Pasay where Guinness World Records adjudicators Jack Boudreau, certified that Globe made some Guinness World Record. "The spirit of Guinness World Records is to push, which are all Guinness World Records attempts. Participation is one of the hardest to achieve. Globe's huge amount is dedication, organization and attention to detail, all of which could have made to achieve one. The event participants together spirit of the Guinness World Records and its attempts to set new. Hats off to Globe for the World Guinness Records team for doing a very good job. It could never be done right," he said.

"This record-breaking technology event in the Singapore time national events, as spearheaded by Globe Telecom this year. We wanted a campaign that would be meaningful to OFWs here and abroad. What better way to celebrate this OFW-themed event than to treat as well as give gift connecting families and friends," said Globe Consumer Group Head Angelica Lotilla. "Globe Wonderful Text Barge continued the success of Globe Telecom's

The record-breaking text barge event was organized by Globe Telecom with PR support of Synergia Motivasi Media and Innovation (SYNERGY), COLLE Hong Kong, Singapore Telecom and Taiwan Mobile. Event hosts now head to the Philippines to enjoy a week in the region's tourism and then families and enjoy homage to the iconic Filipino culture of gift-giving. It was also voted by Globe the official host of the Philippines and will host entertainment of the country and host numerous events.

Lenovo sees boom in computer demand

By Dianne L. Lucas

THERE remains a large upside for personal computers in the Philippines market which experts significant opportunities for computer manufacturers, despite the recent proliferation of mobile devices and laptops.

More importantly, the local market will account a large portion of the growth for PCs in the region in coming years, according to a senior regional executive of computer manufacturer Lenovo.

At present, PC penetration in the Philippines is less than 10 percent," said Rich Eung Meng who is the general manager and executive director for Lenovo's Asian operations. "There is a huge potential for growth here because more and more people want to be connected to the Internet."

China-based Lenovo is the world's second largest manufacturer of PCs after US-based HP. It acquired the business from IBM a few years ago—indicating the company's intent to "bulk up" lines of laptop devices —allowing it to leapfrog rivals other PC manufacturers.

On top of the potential for increased penetration in the Philippines, Mr. Eung said he was bullish about the prospects for the entire Asian PC market which he expects to grow by more than 10 percent next year.

He said his bullishness was buttressed by Lenovo's size which allowed it to commensurate smaller manufacturers that offer cheaper products.

Because of how Lenovo positioned itself in the market—and that even as "value proposition" for its products often is more—Mr. Eung said the company had differentiated itself from other PC makers, even if their products were similar in value.

"Our products are not commodities," he said, adding that Lenovo had its own proprietary manufacturing facilities, unlike other device makers, many of which share outsourced manufacturing services.

The Lenovo executive also said that Lenovo's dominance over its other competing platforms is "even years...including the entry of Apple products—many businesses still prefer PCs and Thinkpad laptops for "mission" work.

He said the Thinkpad line was the most preferred laptop among businesses because of its reputation for rugged construction which allowed it to withstand the wear and tear of regular travel.

Suffering gov't inaction

By Evelyn M. Devilleres

THERE has been significant success in the fault in against corruption, in both the Department of Agriculture (DA) and the Bureau of Customs (BOC).

The credit largely belongs to the leaders Agriculture Secretary Proceso Alcala and Customs Commissioner Ruffino Biazon.

Nevertheless, there are people at the lower levels who are sabotaging the good work at the top. This is evident in their foot-dragging some "slow speed" or total inaction.

Raids

Last Dec. 15, the DA conducted a successful raid and confiscated banned imported poultry products that carried the Bird of avian or bird flu. The Mylene Agribusiness OIAI, together with its member organization the United Broiler Business Association, previously bought these products from eight retail establishments. They submitted them as proof to the DA and BOC, and requested raids to be undertaken.

On the day of the raids, AA confronted the following statement "In terms of the retail value for 2010 of the illegal importations of poultry products from China and Hong Kong, the known significations research that from research of the United Nations Commodity Statistics Database (UN COMTRADE), at least 7.3 million kilos of poultry meat and products from China were smuggled into the Philippines in 2010. At an estimate of P100 a kilo, this means P730 million in smuggled goods. We may be seeing just the tip of the iceberg."

Slow speed

Only one raid was conducted. But since then only small-scale—and mostly unsuccessful—raids undertaken on banned poultry products were told to the next few days. However, we should note the "slow speed" that preceded this raid.

More than 10 months ago, during the Agriculture Stakeholder 2020 conference convened by Secretary Alcala, Agriculture Committee Chair Sen. Francis Escudero and Rep. Mark Mendoza and the private sector, the issue of smuggled poultry products was brought up for immediate action.

Detailed to the "slow speed" and inaction of the government agencies, the AA leaders themselves bought these products from eight establishments. They then asked during the National Agriculture and Fisheries Council (NAFC) Committee on Poultry, Livestock and Feed Crops meeting last Dec. 12 for raids to be conducted.

COMMENTARY

Committee Chair Rodito Salcedo noted how DA had unsuccessfully tried to organize an inter-agency anti-smuggling committee since the start of the year. Though it had not yet been established because of "slow speed," the stand DA to act on its own on this issue. Thanks to DA officials like Assistant Secretary Dindo Cartagena, the raid was successfully conducted of the one and the.

BOC

Initially the AA leaders requested the BOC to conduct this raid. They were very impressed by the swift 24-hour action that Deputy Commissioner Danilo Lim, with full support from Commissioner Biazon, had given all their complaints.

The was to conduct to 6th supervisory closing the previous administration. AA had submitted a list of 62 shipments of poultry smuggled cashes, but BOC ignored this. This is why AA filed a case against BOC officials at the Ombudsman's Office, but again, "slow speed" and no action.

In the case of this proposed raid, another BOC person had intervened and suggested a substitute instead of a raid, despite the evidence given on the smuggled products. Perhaps this was because big names were involved. Since AA was afraid of the possible "slow speed" caused by this official and the third [illegible] corresponding risk to people's lives, AA told BOC they would instead ask DA to conduct the raid. Fortunately, DA responded within 24 hours.

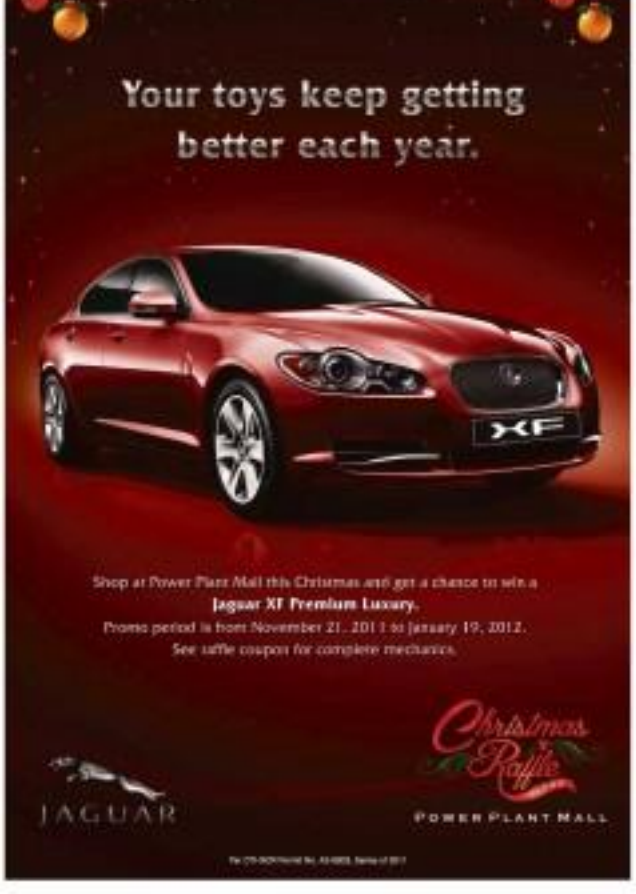
Recommendation

Up to now, 63 days after the raid, not one of the 13 retail establishments that owners has proven to be selling smuggled goods has been charged. This is "slow speed."

We suggest that the top government officials monitor closely the actions of their subordinates, specifically those suspected of exploited "slow speed." "Slow speed" is a subtle form of sabotage.

We further suggest that regular meetings with the concerned private sector organizations be conducted so that the top officials are made aware of their subordinates' "slow speed" sabotage strategy. In this way, Pilloy's direction of "Sama mg Sos Ko" will be a reality, and not just rhetoric.

The author is chair of Agrostat, former secretary for presidential flagship programs and projects, and former undersecretary for Agriculture and Trade and Industry. For the inquiries and suggestions, email: agrostat@philonline.com or telefax: (02) 4122122



BUSINESS

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MNTC refinances P2.3B worth of corporate notes

Toll company takes advantage of low interest rates

By Paolo G. Montecillo

MANILA, North Tollways Corp. (MNTC), operator of the North Luzon Expressway, is refinancing P2.3 billion worth of corporate notes in a bid to lower interest rates and increase profitability.

In a statement on Thursday, Philippine Rating Services Corp. (Philratings) announced that MNTC had made early payments for its fixed rate corporate notes last Dec. 15.

These notes, which Philratings graded at PRS Aaa—the highest mark the firm gives out—are set due until late 2013.

"MNTC's decision to prepay the notes stemmed primarily from the company's liability management program for the year which aims to reduce the average cost of its loans and extend the tenor of its outstanding loans," Philratings said.

MNTC is a wholly owned subsidiary of Metro Pacific Tollways Corp., the road investment arm of Manuel V. Pangilinan's business empire.

"The prepayment of the outstanding notes completes the refinancing initiative that the company implemented early this year to the company transitioned from project finance to a standard corporate finance structure," Philratings said.

Late last year, MNTC said it would refinance as much as P11.9 billion worth of debt to take advantage of lower interest rates available from local banks and retail bond offerings. This aims to improve the company's profitability even in the face of slowing traffic growth that weighs on revenues.

Officials have said the company's growth has been constrained by lower traffic volumes, caused mainly by the recent imposition of value-added taxes, which made the use of toll roads more expensive for motorists.

Volatile fuel prices have also forced many motorists to leave their cars at home and instead take public transport, resulting in a reduction of cars passing through highways.

Peso least volatile Asian currency in '11, says BSP

By Michelle V. Rosca

THE PHILIPPINE peso has been the least volatile among Asian currencies so far this year, spurring local businesses from the ill effects of an erratic exchange rate that befset other emerging markets in the wake of the global economic downturn.

The Bangko Sentral ng Pilipinas said that as of Dec. 20, the volatility of the peso, or the degree of daily fluctuation, stood at 1.23 percent, the most benign movement among major currencies in Asia, the central bank said.

The Japanese yen was the most volatile at 2.53 percent, followed by the Singaporean dollar at 2.47 percent, Indonesian rupiah, 2.33 percent, Malaysian ringgit, 2.11 percent, Thai baht, 1.58 percent and Chinese yuan, 1.34 percent.

"The peso remains competitive. In fact, it is the least volatile among the basket of currencies," BSP Governor Amando Tetangco Jr. said yesterday in a briefing.

The peso also depreciated by only 3.57 percent so far this year.

On the other hand, the Thai baht fell by 11.67 percent, the Malaysian ringgit by 5.21 percent, the Indonesian rupiah by 1.5 percent, and the Singaporean dollar by 1.14 percent. The Japanese yen, meanwhile, appreciated by 4.5 percent.

The BSP said its policy is to let the market determine the value of the peso although it does intervene if needed to avoid too much fluctuation.

The BSP has often been urged by exporters to engage in heavier dollar buying to deliberately weaken the peso.

Exporters said the peso is still relatively strong, and weakening it should help improve their competitiveness amid weakening global demand.

BUSINESS Friday

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Business Features Editor Margie Quiroga Espino

What is an Augmented Reality Ad?

By Roger Pe
Contributor

WHAT IF this Christmas season, you can make your own virtual *parol* and be able to share it with your loved ones on social media?

Now you can just an end to boring print ads and presentations. Unless you are audience.

With Globe's Augmented Reality (AR), you can now say goodbye to one-dimensional marketing presentations, even in corresponding advertising campaigns.

Last Dec. 14, Globe launched a full-page Christmas ad in major publications with a colorful 3-part "Parol" (Christmas lantern) depicting how Filipinos celebrate Christmas in diversity.

The interactive ad allowed the audience to create their own Christmas "parol" and provided instant access for them to share it with their friends in social media.

Want to experience how the magic works? All you need to do is log on through globeaugmentar.globe.com.ph.

Once you're there, look for the AR icon made of three small lanterns located at the lower left corner. From there, you're now ready to hunt on a new virtual treat.

By trailblazing another

FIRST ad in the country using this new technology

Say goodbye to one-dimensional marketing presentations with AR

amazing first in the country, Globe changes the game and takes print advertising and other ad presentations to new heights.

Globe's AR transforms the way information is communicated. To say the least, Globe makes it in the most exciting way possible.

What exactly is Augmented Reality?

Augmented Reality is a live, direct or indirect view of a physical, real-world environment in which elements are enhanced by computer-generated sensory input (like sound, video or graphics).

It involves layering of computer-generated imageries of the real world as seen through the camera of a smartphone or tablet computer.

How does this AR work?

To experience the use of AR in its marketing campaigns, Globe used the technology on its Christmas campaign called "Globe Gets Me."

To see how it works, simply follow these simple steps:

1. Look for "Globe Gets Me" print ad in any publication.

2. Go to this site: www.globe.com.ph/globegetsme

3. Allow the app to access your webcam.

4. Point the black-and-white image code (framed at the lower corner of the ad) at your webcam and wait for the image to appear.

Tip: Don't point the image too close. You can place the ad on your table and point the webcam down or have the image code on your can reader if easily.

A most valuable and indispensable tool for marketing communications, Globe's AR is a fast growing technology.

And the way it engages customers for a specific product or service is a wonderful new social experience.

Here's more:

For digital campaigns, Globe AR is trending. It can drive viral communications to various social media literature via the internet, more fascinating visual rendezvous ever.

For those who are using redemption led strategies like couponing for promotion offers, Globe AR is a tremendous traffic booster, a fast validated AR Rewards System. Philippine market for Augmented Reality will reach $350 million by 2014, in the United States alone.

At the recently concluded Philippine Advertising Congress, Singapore Press Holdings general manager Ivan Ong observed that the use of AR is already prevalent and widely accepted by the Singapore market.

AR is typically seen and used in events, exhibitions and road shows, point of sale programs, interactive installations, website and digital marketing, and mobile marketing and e-commerce solutions.

Where non-innovations begin, Globe is at the forefront, once again taking the lead and taking a big pioneering effort to advance technology for the advertising industry.

With AR, Globe hopes to establish a "more personal engagement and intimate affiliation" with its brands, connecting them through different senses and forge a more robust interaction with its products and services," says Ruby Cristanco, head of Globe Corporate Communications.

"Indeed, this is taking technology a notch higher and we are happy that we have made this milestone in the Philippine advertising industry," she adds.

Through the 400-megawatt prime campaign, Globe joins PG Ignites in celebrating the Yuletide Season in diversity, and that way they connect and communicate with loved ones.

As a brand that lets subscribers enjoy their way, Globe leads with a strong portfolio of innovative, customized and affordable offers that truly enrich the lives of Filipinos, especially this Christmas.

'Marketing Mar Roxas for president'

Dr. Noel Roberto
& Andy Roberto

Analysis of leading candidates in last election to analyze who's likely to succeed P-Noy

Q: SUPER A group of political science students. We've long been fascinated with your social marketing (especially during the time when you worked) the leading candidates in the last presidential election.

You made so much political sense that we chose not to listen to our professor who obviously had much less respect for marketing when he said to us: "Why are you all wasting your time with a dabbler in political science?" But last Friday there you were again writing a "letter" that's not at all a review strategy. What the hell is this kind of campaign idea that Mr. Mar Roxas needs for his presidential goal?

Can you imagine how much potential voting points he is to gain when he does something like this on the problem he foresee even just in Metro Manila?

Please sir, what really was that all about?

A: First of all, we congratulate you for seeing through our letter. And we'd like to answer your question. That's even if we risk annoying even more your professor by our "dabbling" in political science. So here's the entire content of that letter.

We've been asked by the news media to comment on so to do that analysis of "the leading candidates in the last presidential election" in order this time who's likely to succeed P-Noy. We declined the invitation but the question never left us and we found ourselves more and more concerned.

So we'd like to answer your question by applying our social marketing "model of voter choice behavior" for a president as applied to Mr. Mar Roxas. By the way, this same model can be used for any other candidates or candidates you may want to analyze in terms of his or her chances for being the country's president come election time.

We have to say that because you might think that we're a disguised campaign piece for Mr. Roxas. It's not. Maybe in the next column, we'll take on another aspiring presidential candidate or one we really believe should campaign.

Anyway, we've used our model of voter choice behavior since President Cory's term. And we've used it for successfully predicting both winners and losers in the presidential, senatorial, gubernatorial and city mayor races.

In the science of prediction that's what is called "a robust model." If the present case of electing a president, our model says: "The candidate that's able to build and sustain over the campaign period a singular capability image that resonates with the voters' priority to attribute for a president will win. Conversely, the candidate that counts on his multiple capabilities even when true or shifts capability image over the campaign period will lose."

P-Noy won by being true to that model. He stood against corruption from the very start and sustained that throughout the campaign period. But now the corruption issue the top priority concern of the voting population is that true?

The SWS and Pulse Asia surveys both said it was not. It was broken that top 4 have priority voter concerns. Our memory seems to say that it was about the worst 6th in 7th priority. So does this negate the validity of our prediction model?

Well not so fast. To win, P-Noy did not have to have over a majority or more that 50 percent share of votes. He just needed a plurality share of votes to win. Secondly, what voters needed to do for every about their priority concerns there was no follow up question on which concerns did they see as under the control of the government as the president of the country. You see corruption was something the government and specifically the president can do something about ... for better or for worse and we suppose you know who we're talking about "for worse" and who "for better."

We now move on to Mr. Roxas. He is an intriguing case. He was the no. 1 most voted senator. How come? From the marketing perspective, it was because he was able to build and sustain over the senatorial campaign period a singular capability image that resonated with the voters' priority attribute for a senator.

Of course, that's the "Minsan Pinangkot" image which was encouraged by those who voted him in their top-ten 12 slots. The contrast to this image strategy was Senator Ed Angara when he explored his chances for presidency and then as very prominent both of which he lost.

Why? Again, just listening ourselves again to the marketing perspective, it was because in the Tr version of his "best campaign" Senator Angara insisted on his multiple capabilities (six of them) even when they were all true. To be hard chasers as he was advised to (we learned from our friends in the advertising community) to go for a singular capability image as Mr. Estrada, for example, he would have had a real fighting chance.

So what about Mr. Roxas for presidency and the idea of making a singular capability image this time as a Mr. Incorruptible Incorruptible? First of all, carbon emissions is growing to be a priority concern among more and more prosperous and consuming voters. That's a large voting block. If it's not yet on top of the list of voters' concerns, it's easy to bring it there or near there in the minds of voters. Secondly, there has been moderate or practically nothing even slightly effective in the cities to control carbon emissions especially from the biggest source, motor buses. Thirdly, the image for very well in Mr. Roxas' position as Secretary of Transportation. Fourthly, control of carbon emissions via converting just buses first into electric buses is the most cost-effective carbon emission control method.

When focused first on buses, cost-effectiveness comes from two sources. It's cost effective when it's done along the system that the Department's Better Buses Inc. set up in Cavite. That consists essentially of battery switching stations operating like car washes.

Last Friday's column gave the details of how this system will work. The second source of cost-effectiveness comes from the fact that buses follow a fixed daily route. Therefore, battery switching stations need not be fixed which is expensive but can be mobile like a electric truck bringing those batteries for switching from one bus loading or unloading point to another.

So there you are. It's a singular capability image that's not just an image but a delivered, cost-effective, and media friendly Mr. Anti-Carbon Emission. Control a issue or at least a lesser than chaser way to get Mr. Roxas the needed plurality share of votes as the next country's president. And your political science experience can eat his heart out!

Keep your questions coming. Send them to us at MarketingRx@GMAIL.com or dennisburke@gmail.com. God bless!

DDB is design agency of the year

NOW IN its second decade of helping the best upcoming talents get the recognition they deserve, Young Guns International Ad Awards recently announced its global winners for year 2011.

Nina Feliz Garcia, a junior Art Director at DDB Philippines, bested hundreds of competitors from all over the world in Blue winners category, competing all with 1 Gold and 2 Silver Rollers from the awards show. The win also pushed DDB Philippines to become agency of the Year in Design.

"The award giving body is the only recognized awards competition for young talents below 30 years old, honoring future creative leaders and influencers who will "mould the future and the organizations associated them", says organizers and founding members Kristian Barnes, Jason Williams and Michael Ernst who are all based in Australia.

The judges included distinguished creative directors, art directors and copywriters from all over the world, about the number of which that are invited to prestigious creative competitions worldwide.

"We are deeply honored with this award from Young Guns. It's a celebration of our undying commitment of nurturing young talents and developing them to excel. We share the same commitment with Young Guns," says DDB Group Chair and CEO Ed L. Chua. *Roger Pe, Contributor*

AEGIS launches Family Ties making it a first in PH

AEGIS has launched "Family Ties," making it the first BPO company in the Philippines to put in place a comprehensive long-term family welfare program to live with the initiatives of the Department of Labor and Employment (DOLE).

The program was launched in a month-long celebration in October that spanned Angis' four sites in the cities of Makati, Cebu, Baguio and Pasig. More than 4,000 employees and family members took part in the activities, which included a magic show, free face painting and balloon twisting, various services as presented by Pag-IBIG and the Social Security System in their respective booths, financial awareness seminars, and professional development courses courtesy of Angis' career and leadership development training department.

"We are about 12,500 in the Philippines—which positions us as one of the top BPO employers in the country...and about 60,000 globally. This phenomenal achievement would not be possible if not for the hard work of our employees. The bigger part here is the family, who keeps on providing support to their loved ones to make things possible," Angis Abaja, president for Air Asian and Australia, Japan and Korea (AMJ) of Angis Limited, said during the launch.

Family Ties is a pioneering program aimed at promoting the welfare of employees and their families as a key to workplace productivity and the improvement of employees' quality of life.

"It is centered on the belief that by reaching out to the needs of employees and their loved ones, we are promoting and ensuring a family-oriented workplace," said Angelyn Barreiro, Aegis VP for human resources.

Labor Undersecretary Lourdes Trinidad and other DOLE officials congratulated Aegis management for the ground-breaking program.

"The strength of the company is indeed in its workforce," Trinidad said.

Asian shares down; Europe woes weigh

TOKYO—Asian shares fell and the euro struggled on Thursday as doubts remained over how much of the funds that banks raised from an unsupported long-term European Central Bank (ECB) tender will actually flow into struggling euro zone economies and help restore confidence.

MSCI's broadest index of Asia Pacific shares outside Japan fell 0.7 percent, after climbing to a one-week high on Wednesday, while Tokyo's Nikkei stock average ended down 0.6 percent.

Despite the three-year, cheap-interest loans from the euro zone debt woes, with daily swings in the headlines exceeding 2.5 percent for only 16 trading sessions this year, compared with 98 such days for the Euro STOXX 50 and 61 for the S&P 500.

The euro was virtually unchanged around $1.3161, with traders seeing major support around $1.3080, the Dec. 14 low, above $1.3075 through to $1.2860. The euro reached a one-week high near $1.32 on Wednesday, at the ECB's first-ever three-year lending operation on Wednesday, 523 banks borrowed a record 489 billion euros ($638 billion), well above the 310 billion-euro take-up forecast.

The tender eased concerns about an immediate credit crunch, but it does not directly lead to resolving the huge indebtedness of some euro zone countries, which has discouraged investors from lending to euro zone banks because of their huge exposure to sovereign debt.

"The ECB's lending operation is not a fundamental fix to the euro zone's debt problems and it is only a way to buying time, as 'flight-to-safety' bids remain firmly in place," said Shinsuke Katsuhu, present manager at Central Tanshi, a Japanese money brokerage. Further evidence that Japan has become a preferred destination for global funds, government data on Thursday showed non-Japanese investors bought a net 2.0603 trillion yen in short-term Japanese government securities in the week to Dec. 17.

The record largest after a record 2.9752 trillion yen net purchases in the week to Aug. 13.

It was the third straight week of such net buying of bills.

Non-Japanese investors also were net buyers of Japanese government bonds (JGBs) in the same week.

"Foreign investors have helped drive down yields on Japanese short-term securities in recent months as Europe's debt crisis deepened, supporting they see Japanese treasury bills as a safe haven and put priority on safety over returns," Katsuhu said.

Despite Japan's huge public debt and a domestic rating agency cutting its top credit rating on Wednesday, JGB markets remain unfazed. More than 90 percent of JGB holders are Japanese, giving the country a solid financing backing, unlike countries such as Italy, where foreigners account for some 40 percent of sovereign debt holdings. REUTERS

Fitch again warns US debt burden threatens top AAA credit rating

But no decision seen before 2013

NEW YORK—Fitch Ratings on Wednesday warned again that the United States' rising debt burden was not consistent with maintaining the country's top AAA credit rating but said there would likely be no decision on whether to cut the rating before 2013.

Last month, Fitch changed its US credit rating outlook to negative from stable, citing the failure of a special congressional committee to agree on at least $1.2 trillion in deficit-reduction measures.

"Federal debt will rise in the absence of expenditure and tax reforms that would address the challenges of rising health and social security spending as the population ages," Fitch said in a statement.

"The high and rising federal and general government debt burden is not consistent with the US retaining its AAA status despite its other fundamental strengths," the sovereign credit strengths," the ratings agency said.

In a new fiscal projection, Fitch said at least $1.5 trillion of additional deficit reduction measures will be required to stabilize the federal debt held by the public at around 99 percent of gross domestic product in the latter half of the current decade. Fitch, which is known as such as negative, had said it was giving the US government until 2013 to come up with a "credible plan" to tackle its ballooning budget deficit or risk a downgrade from the AAA status.

"A key risk of an recurring Congress and administration in 2013 is to formulate a credible plan to reduce the budget deficit and stabilize the federal debt burden. Without such a strategy the sovereign rating will likely be lowered by the end of 2013," Fitch reiterated.

Rival ratings agency Standard & Poor's cut its credit rating on the US to AA-plus from AAA on Aug. 5, citing concerns over the government's budget deficit and rising debt burden as well as the political gridlock that nearly led to a default. On Nov. 21, Moody's Investors Service, warned that its top-level AAA credit rating for the US could be in jeopardy if lawmakers were to backtrack on $1.2 trillion in automatic deficit cuts that are set to be made over 10 years.

The plan for automatic cuts was triggered after the special congressional committee failed to reach an agreement on deficit reduction. Moody's said any pullback from the agreed automatic cuts would affect ratings in 2013, would prompt it to take action. REUTERS

Unveiling a solar panel in an initiative to mark the energization of Pating Cuevo Elementary School are (from left) USAID Office of Energy & Environment deputy chief Joseph Puha, Energy Undersecretary Jay Layug, Isla Verde district supervising principal Cecilia S. Magallo and Meralco-CSRD head and One Meralco Foundation executive director Chris Yap.

One Meralco Foundation president Jeffrey Tarayao speaks beside the Meralco Community Electrification Program.

Meralco energizes Isla Verde school

Ensuring higher levels of learning and a brighter future

By Sunshine Ishizon

It has been the dream of school principal Diomedes Brizon for Pating Cuevo Elementary School to one day have electricity to enable the students to discover the wonders of information technology as group work in well-lit classrooms, and learn more about the world where they live.

For the 216 students and nine teachers of the grade school in Barangay Isla Verde, having consistent power supply also means being able to conduct graduation ceremonies without fear of being interrupted because the gasoline run generator has rushed out.

Today Brizon's dream gets fulfilled as the Manila Electric Co. (Meralco)—through its social arm One Meralco Foundation (OMF)—energizes the school in Isla Verde, Batangas. The foundation partnered with organizations like the Alliance for Rural and Renewable Energy (ARRMEC), EnerFuture Corp. and the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for this program.

"Maraming school activities na tuming maaring gawin ngayong may kuryente na ang school at hindi na kailangan gumamit ng mga ilaw na maaaksidente kung ang mga ito," Brizon said.

Students can now use computers, projectors, TV sets and other equipment that can enhance their learning process. Teachers can also use DVD players and audio-visual aids.

Twelve-year-old Rose Ann Amul, a Grade 6 student who aspires to be a computer engineer one day, is excited at the prospect of doing science group work and acting workshops with electricity in the school.

"Pangarap ko po na makapagtapos ng kolehiyo at makapagtrabaho para at ating pamilya at mga kaibigan na kulang sa kuryente. Masaklap talaga at aming pag-aaral ang pagkukunan ng kuryente at aming pan-ulam," Amul confessed.

Her sentiments are shared by Leilani Dungcal-Isio, an 11-year veteran teacher who teaches English, Filipino and Philippine History to Grade 6 pupils at Pating Cuevo Elementary School.

"Maliwag magiging ng electricity at ng benefits nito kung hindi mae-experience mismo ng mga bata kung paano napapadali ang buhay kapag may kuryente sa paaralan natin," she noted.

With gasoline-run generators, the school has to spend P128 just to have limited electricity running for eight hours a day. It translates to P6,400 a month, an amount the school cannot afford.

Writers install solar panels that will provide electricity to Pating Cuevo Elementary School.

Rose Ann Amul sits in a dark classroom, hoping that she and her classmates will be able to continuously use donated computers when the school is energized soon.

Seeing the hardships that he thing schools like Pating Cuevo Elementary School face because of lack of electricity, OMF initiated talks with partners such as ARRMEC and USAID to be able to provide a sustainable source of energy in such schools.

In due time, OMF was able to hold meetings with officials from the six barangays of Isla Verde—a one-hour boat ride from the Port of Batangas—and present the possibility of school electrification.

Pating Cuevo Elementary School was the first among the island's schools to submit a proposal to OMF in November. Barely a month later, solar panels were set up on the school's roof in such a short period, amazing many in the school community especially the principal.

Last November 26, OMF officials , together with Energy Undersecretary Jose Layug Jr. and Joseph Puha, USAID-Philippines Office of Energy and Environment deputy director , took the boat to Isla Verde for ceremonies to mark the school's energization.

OMF President Jeffrey Tarayao said bringing the benefits of electricity to schools in off-grid communities such as Isla Verde is as much a challenge as it is an obligation for the foundation.

"Meralco's core business is power distribution and the Meralco Foundation is here to ensure that as demand grows, get electricity and more Filipinos get access to these simplest forms," he added.

Through the Meralco Community Electrification Program (MCEP) which was established in 2007, OMF seeks to provide electricity especially to those who remain deprived of the convenience of legal electricity service.

Before March 2012, OMF plans to install solar panels in each of the remaining five elementary schools in Isla Verde and energize them in time for the opening of classes in June.

The solar panels, when fully charged, are capable of generating one kilowatt of electricity that is enough to continuously power light bulbs in the classrooms as well as laptops and TV sets which serve as learning tools.

Several students of Pating Cuevo Elementary School are among the beneficiaries of Meralco's "Maliwanag ang Buko" campaign, through which the distribution utility company has committed to send 1,000 underprivileged children to school.

For them and other residents of Barangay Isla Verde, it is the best Christmas present they ever received—the gift of light and the gift of hope—both promising a brighter future and a better quality of life.

People, Events & Products

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Count the many reasons why you should get your iPhone 4S from Globe

EIGHT days after receiving the first batch of the much-anticipated iPhone 4S, Globe Telecom counts the ways why you should get your iPhone 4S from the one who knows the ins and outs of Apple devices best.

Topping the list is the exclusive trade-in scheme for existing iPhone users who want to upgrade their Apple devices for the ultimate experience. Users of Globe-issued iPhone 3G, iPhone 3GS and iPhone 4 in good working condition can trade-in their units at a specified trade-in value, which may be applied and retained as a discount for qualified purchases or installment of iPhone 4S or designated Globe promo and launch ranges last Dec. 16. The scheme applies for all existing postpaid and prepaid subscribers of Globe.

Aside from the trade-in, Globe subscribers can also purchase a case for their newly-bought iPhone 4S at 20% off the original price. Users say your newest Apple baby is time for the holiday season by taking advantage of the existing discounts available until December 31 only from Globe.

The iPhone 4S is best enjoyed with a slew of mobile applications to take your smartphone experience up a notch. By getting the much-talked about device from Globe, you are also rewarded with free applications - from games, social networking, lifestyle, to entertainment and sports. Just text BUNDLES APP to 4428 on your iPhone 4S to get your dose of free apps. An exclusive app for Globe subscribers using the iPhone 4S who want to check their balance is also available for free. Through this app, users can subscribe to a wide array of text, call and mobile browsing promos with a simple touch on the screen. Talk about form and functionality brought to you by Globe! Just text DWNLOAD to 2222 for free to download the app.

And because the iPhone 4S is such an amazing device, Globe puts it with its equally amazing postpaid plans that are customizable, customizable and affordable. Under the different plans are buy-a-gift offers, which include unlimited access to mobile internet. Globe understands that the iPhone 4S is a data-intensive smartphone, which users were prone to bill shock because of features such as Siri and iCloud. With Globe data plans giving users unlimited mobile internet with fixed charges, there's no way you'll receive postpaid bills that will make your hair rise.

"Globe is all to a great start with iPhone 4S and we're looking to become a hit with our customers," said Peter Bithos, Senior Advisor for Consumer Business of Globe Telecom. "On top of the great value-for-money plans that we have lined-up for our customers we are giving them the power to choose what they want to do with their iPhone4S, as they can enjoy this breakthrough device their way."

On top of giving customers the power to choose their own plans, they can also color their iPhone 4S devices through various options - they can have it picked up at all Globe stores nationwide or they can choose to have their iPhone to be covered by calling the Customer Sales Hotline at 730-1910, or ordering online via www.globe.com.ph.

The number of online pre-orders for iPhone 4S on Globe Telecom's pre-order website continues to grow, with customers signing-up for the latest iPhone model, requesting the release of orders after Globe launched the iPhone 4 last year despite being canceled by smuckers' operator. Globe started taking pre-orders for iPhone 4S last December 1, 2011. To place an order, log on to or http://iphone4s.globe.com.ph.

So you've roamed the wave why it's how or get your iPhone 4S from Globe. While are you waiting for? Take that big bite and be part of the Apple mania once again with a thousand reasons more.

SUNTRUST CONDO UNIT FOR GMA-7's PROTEGE CHAMPION

GMA-7's Protege Champion, Inc. (CPI) awards GMA-7's Protege Grand Prize Winner Krizia Nan (center) with a two-bedroom unit at the Suntrust Adriatico Gardens worth P7.5 million. Presenting the ceremonial key and Condominium Certificate of Title to Krizia and CPI's MVP for Marketing & Training Jerry H. Rolda and SVP for Finance and Operations Jeanne Chan S. Caserta. Suntrust Adriatico Gardens is a three-tower cluster situated at the heart of Manila. Manila and showcases an unbeatable location that is accessible to top commercial and business centers, educational institutions, historical landmarks, and other private and public offices.

NISSAN X-TRAIL CVT FOR SM APPLIANCE PROMO WINNER

All-Merry Christmas gift. Nissan Motor Philippines, Inc. (NMPI) recently gave away a brand new Nissan X-TRAIL CVT for the grand prize winner of SM Appliance Center's "Shop, Win and Play" promo. Receiving the documents to grand-new X-trail CVT 2.0 is Arlene Dela Cruz of Parang, Marikina City from Nissan Nissan Westgate Sales Group Manager Edwin Gallagher, Sales Agent Eneric Pacheco Nissan Manager Fiona Ignacio. Cars are chosen from locations of SM Appliance Center customers who purchased items from June to August this year, from P1,000 single or accumulated purchases from any SM Appliance center branch entitled customers with a raffle coupon. Chances of winning were increased when customers used their BPI credit card. Apart from the X-TRAIL CVT, prizes at stake were SOUZ 2011 entertainer systems, 10 40" Sony Internet TVs. Recently handed as the 2011-2012 Autotruck Heads Choice Sport Utility, the new X-Trail CVT combines functionality, comfort, and style to give the best value product fit to the Filipino motorists lifestyle. It sells the cost for the Nissan X-TRAIL Developed lifestyle - consumers who work hard but play hard. Mid-Size in its a truck, as the X-trail CVT offers timeless possibilities when it comes to vehicle ownership. It features SOVT (Xtronic Continuous Variable Transmission) that offers a stress-free no-shift-shock driving experience. At the heart of the vehicle is a QR25DE in-line, six-gear displacement that delivers peak performance of 170ps for greater and maximum torque of 226Nm. Top X-Trail CVT is packed with rich amenities that include 6-way power seat for enhanced cargo flexibility, hook drawers, cup coolers and all-mode configurations seats.

Goldilock's offers Party Funfeast for the holidays

THIS season will have you hopping from one feast to others which a great relief you are the "designated host" of the party. You'll most likely be up to your eyeballs in kitchen duties, and it's not even Noche Buena yet.

In order to provide a hassle-free Christmas Party, Goldilocks, the country's number one bakeshop, presents the Party Funfeast, instead of going through the trouble of cooking and clean-up, give yourself a break and enjoy party-sized servings of delicious all-time favorite dishes. Celebrate the season with mix-and-match servings of Goldilocks All-veggie Lumpia, Binagoongan, Shanti Pakbok, Chicken Barbecue, Fiesta Pack Meatless, Spaghetti, and Kare-Kare. Or you can even order individual Christmas Solo Packs (available in P75, P85, and P95 servings) if you're one who keeps close track of your guest list.

Also, in this festive season, the phrase "the more, the merrier" holds true. If you order P1,500 worth of Goldilocks Party Funfeast dishes, you are entitled to freebies and other rewards.

Being the "designated host" for the season's celebration should not be taken as a burden, but as a privilege. It only means that they know you're the one who can give them the best Christmas feast, so give them just that with the Goldilocks Party Funfeast.

For orders and inquiries on the Goldilocks Christmas Funfeast dishes, you may visit your nearest Goldilocks branch, call the Go Delivery hotline at 888-3-1999, or e-mail mypartyt@goldilocks.com.ph for a Gold-ipod Christmas.

Typhoon Sendong disaster relief efforts

Metrobank, Toyota foundations allot P5 million to flood victims in Mindanao

IN SOLIDARITY with the people of Mindanao and the Visayas, the Metrobank Group and Toyota Motor Philippines have pooled resources to address the immediate needs of victims of recent calamity through the umbrella-type arms - the Metrobank Foundation, Inc. (MBFI) and Toyota Motors Philippines Foundation, Inc. (TMPF). Group Chairman George S.K. Ty has allocated a total of P5 million to the ongoing emergency and relief operations in the provinces badly affected. The Metrobank-Toyota Sendong Calamity Assistance Fund shall be counted through the local government units of Iligan City in Lanao del Norte, Cagayan de Oro City in Misamis Oriental, Dumaguete City and the municipality of Tanjay in Negros Oriental provinces. Likewise, the Philippine Red Cross and the Department of Health (DOH) shall also be receiving grant and assistance in support of the operations of the flood victims. Metrobank Group Chairman Dr. George S.K. Ty who chairs both the Metrobank Foundation Inc., and Toyota Motors Philippines Foundation, Inc., said, "With this donation, we hope that we will be able to assist and somehow alleviate the plight of our fellow Filipinos who were badly affected by tropical storm 'Sendong'. For more than 20 years, the foundations has been continuously giving financial support to calamity victims both locally and internationally as part of its humanitarian initiatives. This year, it has extended calamity assistance to the victims of typhoon 'Pedring' and 'Quiel' in September. Earlier this year, it has also partnered with Toyota Motors Philippines Corp. in giving P5 million donation to the Japanese government in the 8.9 magnitude earthquake that hit the country last March.

Asia Brewery sending 350,000 bottles of Absolute distilled drinking water

ASIA Brewery is sending 350,000 bottles of Absolute Pure Distilled Drinking Water to disaster areas where Typhoon Sendong has left so many in dire need of potable water. With logistics partners Philippine Airlines and World Express, at least 60,000 bottles will be sent by air to CDO for immediate deployment. Balance 290,000 will be sent by sea to ABI warehousing arms for distribution to other resource-relief groups. 7-Eleven is mobile water refilling stations branches are also on the way. Those in need may contact CDO and Iligan offices. "As the flag carrier, Philippine Airlines is one in grieving with the Nation for all those affected by the severe flooding. PAL is providing as much resources to help our brothers and sisters in Mindanao, but we know this will never be enough given the enormity of the crisis. We are praying and hoping for the best," said Visiminio Ojo, SVP of Philippine Airlines.

"As the logistics partner of Asia Brewery, we are delivering Absolute bottled water and P-units to our brothers and sisters in CDO and Iligan severely affected by Typhoon Sendong", said Mayette Sisenos, VP of Aboitiz Express.

Negros Navigation, SuperFerry to help transport relief goods to affected areas

NEGROS Navigation-AFS today committed its passenger brands SuperFerry and Negros Navigation toward relief efforts in Mindanao, after Typhoon Sendong hit the region. In a statement, NEGROS Chief Executive Officer Sudhir Parpia Jr. said the company will help transport relief goods to affected areas in Mindanao free of charge. "As part of our contribution, Super Ferry and Negros Navigation vessels will be used to assist government agencies, NGOs, and private sectors in sending food, clothes, water and emergency supplies to Cagayan De Oro, Iligan, and Ozamiz." According to Parpia, Negros Navigation-AFS is closely coordinating with government agencies, NGOs, and local government units for the immediate distribution of relief goods. "It is vital that we send aid to the most seriously affected areas immediately. As Negros Navigation and SuperFerry vessels serve all ports of call in Mindanao, government agencies and NGOs will be in a better position to address the needs of the typhoon victims." The company has also set up collection centers across the country. Manila residents may bring relief goods to Negros Navigation and SuperFerry ticket outlets in Robinsons Ermita, Araneta Center Cubao, and Rotary Mall in Batangas. With 475 Express Centers in Pre 2 and Pre 15 in Manila will also accept donations. For Visayas: Pier 4 in Cebu, Fort San Pedro in Iloilo, and 999-475 ticketing office in Gaisano in. In Bacolod. For more information, please call (02) 554 8777 and (02) 528 7000.

Robinsons Land Corp. sets up donation booths in malls as part of "Let Hope Afloat" drive

ROBINSONS Land Corp. is encouraging shoppers in give what they can to help in the efforts to provide assistance to those affected by typhoon "Sendong" as it spearheads a relief drive dubbed "Let Hope Afloat," in line with this, it has set up donation booths which are located at its three main malls. These donation booths will be open from Dec. 23-30, 2011 from 10 a.m. to 9 p.m. RLC personnel will also be roaming the booths to collect are also provide the donors with acknowledgement receipts. RLC will be accepting goods such as: food items (rice, sweetened, canned goods, sugar, instant salt, mongo beans, potable water), medicines (paracetamol, antibiotics, analgesics, oral rehydration salts, multivitamins and medications to treat diarrhea diseases), and non-food items (bath soaps, towels, shampoo, toothbrush, toothpaste, plastic mats, blankets, mosquito nets, water containers and laundry soaps). The following malls will serve as drop-off points for the donations: Robinsons Galleria, Robinsons Place Manila, Robinsons Metro East, Robinsons Place Manila, Information Booth near the Edsa mall entrance, Level 1, Robinsons Place Manila, Information Booth near the Dix. Monica mall entrance, and, Robinsons Metro East, Donation Booth, lower ground.

SSS suspends loan payments, advances pensions from typhoon-hit members in CDO and Iligan

The Social Security System (SSS) will implement a calamity relief package for its members and pensioners who are victims of the deadly Tropical storm "Typhoon Sendong in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan, starting with a six-month suspension of member loan payments, a three-month advance payment of pensions, and a reduction in the interest rate of the loans from the SSS under the SSS Housing Loan Program for Repairs/Improvements. President and chief executive officer Emilio S. De Quros, Jr. made this announcement following the annual SSS Christmas gift-giving to various charitable institutions, held on December 20, 2011 at the SSS main office in Quezon City. Members in Cagayan de Oro and Iligan with existing SSS loans - whether salary, housing or business loans - have the option to apply for a six-month suspension of their loan payments, without penalties, with an extension of their amortization term by six months. For members with current salary loans, they can alternatively avail themselves of an early renewal of their salary loans, with the balance of the existing loan to be deducted from the proceeds of their new loan. Eligible members may file their applications for either loan payment suspension or early loan renewal with their nearest SSS branches. Those who avail of the loan payment suspension will no longer be eligible for early loan renewal, and vice versa. The SSS has also reduced the interest rate of its Housing Loan Program for Repairs/Improvements, from 10 percent to eight percent.

LIFESTYLE Fashion & Beauty

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Fashion news 2011: From Kate to the Volcanoes and Mario Maurer

By Cheche V. Moral

1. Kate and William's royal wedding

It's a bit peculiar that fashion's arguably biggest moment for 2011 was a wedding. But the world watched in awe as April 29 no, after months of speculation and guessing games, commoner Kate Middleton stepped out from her London hotel room in a wedding dress designed by Sarah Burton for Alexander McQueen. The classic, Grace Kelly-esque dress ushered the 'new duchess' status in fashion icon, and made Burton, her late mentor's protégé, a star designer overnight. A few months later, the dress drew a crowd of 600,000 visitors (!) was exhibited at Buckingham Palace.

KATE Middleton wears in a classic Grace Kelly-esque wedding dress.

2. Alexander McQueen retrospective at the Met

Who knew that a seemingly esoteric subject would be a top museum draw? For three months beginning in May "Savage Beauty," a retrospective exhibit of the works of the British fashion designer who took his own life in 2010, drew record crowds at the Metropolitan Museum of Art's Costume Institute. Visitors lined up outside for hours so that the exhibit had to be extended for a week. When it closed on Aug. 7, "Savage Beauty" made it to the Met's Top 10 most popular exhibits, with over 661,500 visitors.

3. Designer meltdowns, firings

In March, Dior's flamboyant creative director John Galliano was fired from his post after an anti-Semitic rant in a Paris café. The same for his successor has been a big guessing game in the industry, drawing a long list of possibilities.

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Fashion news 2011: From Kate to the Volcanoes and Mario Maurer

From page B1

his confidence, including Marc Jacobs, Giorgio Tesi, Alexander Wang, Jason Wu. After nearly a year, the post Galliano-ruined **reunion** reopen, with the Belgian Raf Simons as the most recent frontrunner. The house of Balmain also gained ways with its designer Christophe Decarnin, who created shoulder-popular and extravagantly priced leather chic moto and jackets for the brand. The designer was reportedly getting treatment for depression. The movements suggested that the era of the star designer is on the wane, and a poor bottom line no longer justifies star behavior.

4. Shakeups

After its overtures of an Hermès takeover failed, LVMH announced it had acquired the storied Italian jewelry house Bulgari. Francesco Trapani, Bulgari's chief executive, says the only member of the founding family to still hold a prominent position in the company's operations, and the lack of interest in younger family members to get involved in the business was seen to have bolstered the sale.

In another luxury company, Jimmy Choo cofounder Tamara Mellon stepped down from the company as chief creative officer after it was sold to a German luxury conglomerate which also owns Bally and Derek Lam. Mellon, who no longer has a financial stake in the company, married Jimmy Choo US years ago in London with its namesake cobbler of Malaysian descent.

Louis Vuitton also announced recently that its longtime chief executive Yves Carcelle is stepping down in 2014 to assume another post in the company. He has been CEO for ten decades, and was responsible for growing the brand into a global behemoth and the most profitable luxury fashion house. Carcelle, 61, will become president of Fondation Louis Vuitton, which is building a Frank Gehry-designed museum in Paris.

5. Christian Louboutin sues YSL over red soles

Christian Louboutin, he of the signature red soles, filed an injunction to stop YSL from selling a pair of red shoes that also had red soles. Louboutin argued it infringed on his trademark. (We still want the shoes), and so was his eventual appeal. Tiffany & Co. of the "Tiffany blue" hues also have filed its own brief in support of Louboutin, claiming signature colors should be (understood).

6. Filipina wins Supermodel of the World

After years of placing bridesmaid in the prestigious modeling fil, a Filipina finally won this year's Ford's Supermodel of the World contest in New York. Seventeen-year old Janine Maggerming, a freshman at UP Diliman, won the $250,000 modeling contract with Ford Models.

7. Valentino virtual museum

Valentino Garavani shows stirs with his newly launched virtual museum, replete with 3,000 images and 100 videos spanning a 50-year career, and set up in a 3D pinnacle. The virtual museum in 18,000 sqm and has seven different galleries. Giancarlo Giammetti, Valentino's longtime partner, said the project cost "a lot of money." But if the reviews are anything to go by, it looks the money very well spent.

8. Auction of Elizabeth Taylor's jewelry collection

The star jewelry collection of the late actress fetched a lot more than the projections. The 69-piece collection took $116 million at the end of the Christie's auction in New York. The star piece was a 16th-century pearl given her by Richard Burton, whom she married twice. He bought it at $37,000 in a 1969 auction; it sold for $11.8 million. Taylor's famous couture collection, including the two dresses she wore to her weddings with Burton, sold for $2.6 million, about 10 times the pre-sale estimate.

9. Belo opens US clinic; Calayan staffer caught in US sting

While the Belo Medical Group marked the opening of its first clinic in the US, local chef Calayan Sangalcores Corp. got embroiled in a controversy when a staffer in a West Hollywood clinic was caught in a sting operation, reported the Los Angeles Times. The county prosecutor, according to the report, was considering charges of practicing medicine without a license. In their bid for the US market, the rally on for Belo-1, Calayan-0.

10. Paris Hilton, Ed Westwick visit; post-Volcanoes billboard notice; Bench lands on US reality TV show

Hotel heiress and reality TV star Paris Hilton and "Gossip Girl" actor Ed Westwick were just two of the stars to visit the country. Hilton was here to unveil a bench property she's co-designing as well as her eponymous bag boutiques. Westwick was introduced as the face of the clothing brand Bendhappe, Bench's sister brand. The Filipino actor Mario Maurer, also a Bendhappe endorser, who was a bigger hit among the young market.

After its controversial Philippine Volcanoes billboard, which were taken down when two city mayors claimed the images of the athletes in their skivvies were offensive and suggestive, Bench's newest brush landed stateside exposure when it was featured in an episode of 'America's Next Top Model.'

11. Andrea Jang's Manila jaunt

One of the big beauty industry events this year was Andrea Jang's Philippine jaunt – her first in 12 years. The Avon CEO was here to meet with 8,000 Avon sales reps for the 'Avon Believe World Tour,' marking the brand's 125th year. It was the largest gathering of Jang's 56-city global tour, meant to rally and boost the morale of women's cooperative. Her CEO and her company are proponents of women empowerment, and the Philippines is one of its top markets.

12. SM inks deal with Uniqlo

SM lands another global fashion brand, not the Swedish H&M as long rumored, but the Japanese label Uniqlo. Last year, SM also brought in the Korean-owned fast-fashion chain Forever 21. Uniqlo is known for well-made casual clothing, and will open its first Manila store in early 2012.

MAURIN Dutti's earth-toned holiday collection

Khaki, beige for outdoorsy holiday dressing

MANGIMO Dutti's women's holiday line for women is a mix of earth tones like khaki, olives, beiges and garnets. Combined with plaids, jacquards and coordinated sweaters, they create a look inspired by hunting and the outdoors.

A refined equestrian look can be achieved with a range of beiges, camels and khaki mixed with textures like washed leathers and soft wools. Classic riding trousers with luxurious cuffs are always a safe bet for a clean look. A printed scarf adds color and flair.

There are splashes of color like orange, or the crisp red clean look in ivory, natural and caramel-colored tops. They go with dress in: bermuda for a laidback look, or A-line skirts for a more feminine touch. And, what better time of the year to wear those capes and cable knit sweater than holidays? Put them over smart nappa dresses and asymmetrics.

Updated classics such as duffel coats, oversized jackets, plaid A-line skirts, lumberjan and shirts, and twin-set jackets in stripes evoke a vintage look. Colors like sea blue, camels, bottle green, garnet and red exude the Christmas spirit.

Create a look inspired by the '70s with detachable pashas with leather trim, reversible garments, careful tailoring and floral print shirts in a range of khaki green, ochre, caramel and yellow.

For men, there are '60s-inspired pieces like fair isle sports coats in pearly knit, reversible sweatervests trimmed with leather and in neutral colors combined with ink blue, bottle green, garnet and cocoa.

Reversible garments give off a rugged yet refined look with the mixed of check, quilted, pockets and zippers, and boots, bags and plaid shirts. Ochre, green and olive mixed with shades of burgundy, eggplant and cherry are dominant colors.

Massimo Dutti is exclusively distributed by Ayala Specialists, Inc. (ASI) and is at Greenbelt 5, Shangri-la Mall and Power Plant Mall.

TOP: Women can keep a monotone ensemble interesting with brown leather shorts; one can pair a tweed blazer with pants in a garnet shade. Above: Black-and-white with printed scarves, leather jackets and checkered polo shirts.

SM designers shine on

'TIS THE season to party, sparkle, and shine. And somehow there is nothing like a designer ensemble to make you stand out in the crowd. With their names behind the labels, designers bring their flirty sense of innovation.

SM Department Store has gathered its premiere designers to project their signature designs for the holidays—Anel Bartolin, Vic Bañas for Filtrantz, Billie de la Rosa, Arnold Galang, Cesar Gaspo, Rissi Llanes, Ellen Ocampo, and Jon Salcedo for Jusu.

Their collections are available at selected SM Department Stores.

Feminine, flirty—and doable mix

UNICA HUB, its 18-year-old brand, has unveiled a trendy collection consisting of tops and dresses that can take a woman from the boardroom to night-outs.

The evolution of the brand is reflected in its endorser Sarah Geronimo, whose style has evolved from nurse-hopper to something classier and more mature.

The line ranges from trousers and pants perfect for back-to-back meetings to flirty dresses paired with cropped cardigan for office parties, and for family reunions, flirty tops and shorts.

Unica Hija is at SM City North Edsa, SM City Manila, SM City Sucat, SM City Baclo, SM City Sta. Rosa, SM Fairview, Glorietta 5, Trinoma, Robinson's Galleria, Sta. Lucia East Grandmall, Festival Supermall, Eastwire Mall of Davao, Market! Market!, Eastwood City Walk 2 and The Shops, Greenhills Shopping Center and select Department Stores nationwide.

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TOY KINGDOM's

Toy Clearance Sale at SMX

Toy Kingdom, the amazing toy superstore, launches its Toy Clearance Sale from December 27 to January 1 at the SMX Convention Center Hall 4.

This is perfect for kids who like to spend their Christmas cash gifts on a special toy, or for grown-ups who still have to complete their Christmas list. They'll love this post Christmas sale's amazing deals with up to 70% off on selected and well-loved toy brands, as well as merchandise featuring favorite characters such as Disney, Sponge Bob, Dora the Explorer, Ben 10 and Transformers.

Find more gift ideas at Toy Kingdom stores, Toy Kingdom Express at all SM Department Stores and visit our website at www.toykingdom.ph.

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SMART

How to use red lipstick

The color is a classic, and the foremost style rule is to wear it with balance

KNOCKOUT!

Ria Francisco-Prista

AFTER ACCOMPANYING my friend to buy some toys for Christmas recently, we ended up walking around the beauty section while waiting for the girls to get wrapped. We decided it was time to treat ourselves to something nice for the holidays. Some sort of Christmas present for ourselves, and it had to be the perfect shade of red lipstick that we could use throughout the holidays.

Red lipstick is a classic, and, in my opinion, a shade every girl has to have. It is, after all, the fastest way to glam up. We cooed up in the Chanel counter and was more than happy to try a dozen red lippies. The whole Christmas collection was made to complement red lips.

CHANEL lipstick

I went home with the Lumière Sculpt De Chanel, the light-lighting powder, while my friend brought home the Rouge Allure 207 lipstick.

CHANEL Christmas collection

You see it in yourself to find the right shade for you, there are some rules you should remember when wearing red.

Rule 1: It's all about balance.

When going for red lips, remember you want them to pop

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FCCP directors Tessie Rodrigo, Nene Lucero, Lesly Hahn, Mabel Alcazo

Grand ball toasts culture; Vicki Belo toasts David Foster

THE FRIENDS FOR Cultural Concerns of the Philippines (FCCP) had a grandness ball for its 32nd anniversary at the Makati Shangri-La Hotel, dubbings.

Storied Grosvenor, the ball was superbly organized by FCCP president Nenai Lennar with the group's directors—Grace Palma Brosnan, Thelma Cuna, Karen Haussmann, Sheila Lerma, Nene Po Lim, Gilda Sahonga and Shoe Rizo.

The Ritual Ballroom was transformed into a "Royal Court" by brilliant decorator Jaojoe Abiera, no less, pulongpong.

The two elegant and magnificent celebration of music and dance had our town's well-heeled gentry in their best bib and tucker and "Bling Galore" that added dazzle to the happening.

For entrée, there were Michael Williams and Mercedes Lumbreras-Yulo, who sang divine excerpts from top Broadway hits.

They were later joined by FCCP members and their grandchildren and some invitees in performing the "Sound Curtain," "I Could Have Danced All Night," "Camelot" and "Hail Mr. Dance!"

"Thanks to our benevolent sponsors Brenda Campaingco, Cebrania Distiller Goodwill Organics, Equity Homes and Private donor Joseph Estrada, among others, we at FCCP can continue its scholarship projects, as well as other activities related to the arts and culture," said Irene Marino Lennar.

WITHOUT BATTING AN EYELASH
Maurice Arcache
Photos by Alex Van Hagen
powered by **RMEN M&C MENS**

Best-dressed

For the benefit of the Philippine Cancer Society, high Manila society members convened for the Best Dressed Women of the Philippines Ball at the Ritual Ballroom of the Makati Shangri-La.

The stylish fund raiser was led by the lovely Cate Albert, president and owner of Filu, Forever, Stacks Hamand Hobbies, as well as her new baby Filu Belo-tees.

She was followed by style icon Letty Santos and other awardees such as Connie Moss, Sheila Sermsuksa Romero and several others.

Albert, who is constantly in love with the four "F's of her life"—family, friends, fashion and Filu—is a clothes horse in her own elegant right. She walked down the ramp in not one, not two, but three fabulous Angelo Cordero creations.

Meanwhile, the ball of lamas, or lace par together by the Makati Shangri-La was exotic, but all throughout—from appetizer to dessert.

Among cats Albert were designer and friends who strongly support the fight against the big "C."

WOMEN of FCCP Grace Tiangco, president Nene Lennar, Thelma Cuna, Karen Haussmann, Nenita Lesaca

CO-CHAIR Nene Po Lim with "Queen" participants Mari Lumbino and Carrie Bautista

DAVID Foster, Dr. Vicki Belo, Michael Bolton

YOLANDA Hadid Foster, Philip Bailey, Martin Zobel, David Foster, Jonathan Manik, Hayden Kho

CLAIRE dela Fuente, Atom Araullo, Michael Bolton, Ronnie Henares

KYLA, Gary Valenciano, Angelina Pangilinan, Michael Bolton, Gerlie Garcia, Kate Torralba, Cristalle Henares

MILLET David, Dr. Vicki Belo, Elise Estrada, Jojo Dingcong

ALBERT Jarolle, Monique and Carlo Lopez, Butch and Cris Albert, Isabella and Carlo Albert

EDDIE Ramirez, Cris Albert, Marvee Almeda

MARC Leong, Frigate Holdings chair Wellington Tieong and son Jason, Ramona CEO David Cypers

GRANT Lim, Jingo de Guzman

RUPERT Jadewa, Tim Yap

BETTI Reyes, wife Jeannette R., Ryla Corona, Loni Pua

RALPH Joseph, Shelly Lazaro

ANA NERO Santos with mom Phumbi Lumbino

LINDY Pellicer, Mike Potenciano, Leslie Yuvual

JANELLE Dizon, Steven Atkins, Carlo Tribo

NINI Cosca, Cris Albert, Dennis de la Cruz, Irma Reyes, Bonnie de la Cruz

ELIJAH Halcayon, Marion Quiling, Danny Ordonez

Vicki Belo, David Foster

Dr. Vicki Belo of the Belo Medical Group hosted a splendid dinner for American songwriter-performer David Foster and his gorgeous bunch with Yolanda Hadid Foster.

Together with daughter Cristalle Hemares, Doc Vicki entertained the Fosters and their guests in their well-appointed home which was filled with flowers for the evening.

Vicki, in a fire-engine red outfit, welcomed us with her charming and confident, Belo imaging and marketing consultant and our pulongpo, Jojo Dingcong.

Enjoying the cocktails were television executive Annette Gozon-Abrogar, banker Andrew Gan, model-architect Veronica Arellano, Jonathan Manik, glamorous Marinella Lobosa and beauty queen Ruffa Gutierrez.

Chilled champagne at the bar contributed, a trademark of any Belo-hosted party or event.

Vicki favored popular Bel Room to program a sumptuous elegant buffet as the Fosters are known for their preference for Japanese food.

When Vicki, Cristalle, Jojo, Marites Gundersdorff and, yes, my love, actor Derek Ramsay visited the Fosters' literally "palace in the sky" in Malibu, who best of an equally fab dinner at the iconic Japanese pad/sosyal temple/bebe.

But presented a sumptuous medley of vegetable crisps, edamame and more with lobster. There was a fresh salmon carving station, as well as fresh maki sushi, shiitake-wrapped prawns, wasabi oysters, tempura, modern old tempura, tiramisu ochima pasta, black cod, beef kabasi...and for grand desert, the gruesome-crème brûlée.

Eat-ready-smoked-and for the cake was super yummy!

Aprés all that drinking and dining, David E. sprung a surprise by playing the piano and belting a mini concert right in Vicki's expansive living room, turning it into a concert hall to everybody's loud applause.

A grand time and a fun evening...truly the Belo way, dubbings.

Anonima

The renowned craftsmanship of Italian watchmaking was the focus as the Power Plant Mall when the high-end brand Anonima was launched in the Philippine market.

The Florence-based brand was brought to the Philippines by "Boss" Tony Ian, whose operations under pioneering group Frigate Holdings, famous for its luxury-cars repair and Maserati. The launch was led by Frigate chair Wellington Tieong and his son Jason. It's Boss Time management director Valentino across Lord Pho-tini present.

Anonimo CEO David Cypers acted as host/chef for the Master's assignment, dubbings.

Founded in 1997 in Florence, Italy by Gianni Mazzocchi, Anonimo has an eye-catching Italian military watch design, plus extensive range of timepiece options through its various collections. The high-performance Sports Line, the elegant Millenaire Line, the technologically advanced Professionals Line, and the rich and classic Diver Del Line.

Check it out, pulongpo. You'll at least want to have one of these on your wrist permanently.

Anonimo is available at Washington, Power Mall, Rockwell Center. Call +632-8982388 or +632-8899937 or visit www.anonimo.com.

Merry Christmas to all, pulongpo.

Evasian

So sorry, but the photo with Chabeng Lakaneri should have been with Meg Prats-Topacio, sister of the groom's mother, Marian Prats Pharma. So sorry, pulongpo.

How to...

from page D1

out, so go easy on the blush and dark the eyeliner. Load up on mascara to open up your eyes. This easy look will get you glam in less than five minutes. The saying, less is more, goes for this look.

Hello 3: Prep before you go red.

Moisturize your lips so they don't get dry. Chapped lips are very unattractive; they become more so when red and highlighted. Remember to line your lips first when using red lipstick, since they have the tendency to bleed. Pat the color in last longer; add translucent powder.

Hello 3: Choose the right shade.

If you are on the fair side, opt for red shades that have pink undertones, while olive-skinned women should look for blue undertones. When shopping for a red shade, do not the Apple first on you, then step out of the store to check if the shade suits you under natural light. Ask sales assistants which red shade girls with your skin tone normally buy. They will save you half the time when picking.

Hello 4: Go easy on the rouge.

Red lips are statement enough, so it would be good to save that red dress for another occasion. Keep your nails short and opt for a light lacquer. If you really love red and want to wear it on your nails, too, the only red that would be acceptable would be the same shade.

Hello 5: Be age-appropriate.

The older we get the thinner our lips get, so pick a red with pink undertones or on the rosy side. Darker reds may make your look too severe; they may also accentuate the lips. Rosy reds make the lips pop out, giving the illusion of them being more plump, thus making you look fresh.

Chic, shimmery–but accessible–holiday dressing

WEAR a daring dress with a statement-making neckpiece, or slip on a cigarette to spruce up the usual feminine look.

By Carmencita S. Sison
Contributor

DUBBED "A Mashup of Style," the Francis holiday collection kicks off the New Year with a bang. The homegrown retail brand serves up irresistible glamour for the holidays, focusing on trend finds and separates that are easy to layer and style to create different looks.

Tuxedo dressing takes shape in gauzed trousers and shirts in monochromatic hues. To keep things interesting, the brand's designers Mario Barrientos and Marel Pangan added patent leather details to high-waist cigarette pants and peplum skirts, which can be paired with fur Mandking jackets or high-shine blouses.

For the festive season, leopard prints take a back seat to snake prints in glossy finish. Prom hunchbacks but comfy drop-crotch pants to skinny peep-toe sandals, you're sure to get your face before fit to wear go.

Capping the alluring collection are tailored dresses, sultry sweaters and knit blouses.

A SIMPLE, sheer button-down shirt goes a long way when coupled with chunky add-ons.

Check out Ramp's Holiday Fashions video at www.inquirer.net.

If those don't satisfy one's need for all things shiny, statement accessories such as opulent bangles, swanky chain belts, and statement-making neckpieces in silver and gold would get one fashion-fixed on a high.

Tying the myriad of separates and dresses together is the brand's selection of staples in several black, nude and white, adding instant oomph to the holiday wardrobe. Just slip one over a chic palazzo jumpsuit or bodycon mini.

The Ramp is at the 2/F Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati City, and Greenbelt 5, Ground Floor, 2/F, Shangri-La Plaza Mall, corner Edsa and Shaw Blvd., Mandaluyong City.

SPECIAL OFFER!
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*Exp. 2011 Whilst Stocks Last
picture city

PUMA

Puma Social: "Here's To The After Hours Athletes!"

PUMA Created "Sportlifestyle".

PUMA SOCIAL is the new "Sportlifestyle" movement.

SOCIAL celebrates The Social Athlete.

A Social Athlete is someone who is in their twenties, or at least someone who sees themselves as in their twenties. They grew up loving to play. They played soccer, baseball, tag, Super Mario; if it could be played, they were game. These Athletes understand that growing up doesn't always mean acting like a grown up. The world is full of ways to play!

Right after work or from a quick run in a marathon, these individuals play different kinds of sports. Sports that have yet to be recognized as sports, until now.

They are athletes, they just haven't been recognized as athletes. They just don't have a uniform...Yet! They are Social Athletes, and this is the Puma Social movement.

RECOGNIZE THE JOYFUL MOMENTS OF EVERYDAY LIFE THAT ARE TURNED INTO SPORTS.

PUMA provides these Social Athletes the perfect uniform, and gives recognition to these individuals as real athletes. So, let's play the game and drop by your nearest Puma store to buy your Social uniform. Remember, work hard and play harder this Christmas!

TIS THE SEASON TO GIVE AND RECEIVE

PUMA STORES: BONIFACIO HIGH STREET • EASTWOOD CITYWALK • FESTIVAL SUPERMALL ALABANG
GLORIETTA 2 • GREENBELT 5 • NEWPORT MALL • TRINOMA • AYALA CENTER CEBU
SM SAN LAZARO DAVAO • LIMKETKAI MALL CAGAYAN DE ORO • ROBINSONS PLACE DACOLOD
SOLE ACADEMY - Katipunan • URBAN ATHLETICS - Shangri-la • TITAN - Bangko Circle • CRATE - Bel Air

Well-designed and wearable

Your Pizza's Just A Click Away

Thank the geek gods for online shopping, ordering your favorite Shakey's pizza is now literally at your fingertips. With just a click of the mouse, you can order anything from the extensive menu that the leading family restaurant has to offer.

When you're stuck at work or want to dine at the comforts of your home, online ordering is the most convenient option to satisfy your cravings for good, old fashioned, brick oven-baked pizza and more!

Online ordering is just the latest innovation that's shaking up all Shakey's outlets.

Shakey's Online Delivery can be accessed through http://www.shakeyspizza.ph. Through this welcome development, the gaps between loved ones to access the menu are easily bridged.

It provides two main services: Delivery, wherein the ordering/paying and receiving parties are one and the same; and Pizza Padala, which has two components.

Pizza Padala Local is when the ordering/paying party is from anywhere in the Philippines; the receiving party is also from anywhere in the Philippines and could consume or claim the ordered product from the ordering/paying party's preferred Shakey's restaurant.

Pizza Padala International is when the ordering/paying party is from anywhere in the world; the receiving party, meanwhile, is from anywhere in the Philippines and could consume or claim the ordered product from the ordering/paying party's preferred Shakey's restaurant.

TYLER HURST into the fashion scene in 2001 offering chill pieces and business attire that could be worn from day to night.

Although most Tyler designs still consist of chill pieces, the brand has expanded to offer dressy styles for formal occasions, well-designed pieces for men and casual pieces for women.

Tyler has unveiled its Holiday 2011 Collection. Each piece in the collection is well-designed and very wearable. Only a limited number of pieces per size and color are produced, how styles are delivered twice a week in limited quantities.

Tyler's new pieces are also available in a wider selection of sizes, from XS to XL for women (size 35-44), and S to XXL for men (size 46-54).

Tyler items are at: B1, Bonny Dress Mall, Bluebell Center; 2/L, Isha Shangri-La Mall; 2/F, Glorietta 4; Adora Department Store, Greenhills S.

For more information, e-mail inquiry@tylerusa.ph.

TYLER has expanded to offer dressy styles for formal occasions.

WEARABLE and dressy for women, and new well-designed men's pieces

GIORDANO
FASHION EXPLOSION
WINNERS
WIN
Giordano

Greenbag goes GLOBAL

The lovely delegates of Ms. Earth 2011 graced the recent launching of the SM Food Group's Greenbag Life. As part of the campaign to promote the use of reusable shopping bags, they visited two SM stores, SM Hypermarket Mall of Asia and SM Supermarket Megamall 4 & 5. While sporting the new SM Greenbag Life, each delegate wrote their "green commitment" on the Greenbag Pledge Wall and met several of the shoppers, even posing for pictures with many of them.

Aiming to reduce the amount of plastic waste that finds its way into Philippine landfills and oceans, SM pioneered the SM Greenbag in 2007. The sturdy, big-capacity flat-bottomed bag was the first reusable bag to be launched in Philippine retail.

The SM Greenbag Life is the second version of the SM Greenbag. It's made of the same durable, washable, and non-woven fabric as the first, but is slimmer, easier to store in your purse or bag, and more affordable than ever.

Environmental awareness has always been one of the SM Food Group's values. After spearheading ecological responsibility when it promoted the use of reusable bags in its stores, SM took it a step further in 2009, implementing the Just the WEB (My Own Bag) program which is being enforced every Wednesday. On this day select SM Food Group stores don't issue customers plastic bags with their purchases, encouraging shoppers to bring their own.

Both versions of the SM Greenbag can be bought at all SM Supermarket, SM Hypermarket and Savemore Market at 25 pesos and 10 pesos each.

Exclusively at:
SUPERMARKET HYPERMARKET savemore

2b LIFESTYLE
Editor Thelma Sevast San Juan Contributing Editor Noel Cabel

Christmas away from home

By Kara Vhel Guiagulo
Student contributor,
Ateneo de Manila University

Foreign exchange students experience a Pinoy Yuletide

FOR FOREIGN students and students on exchange study programs visiting our shores, the Christmas fog is ready to catch on, as we Pinoys seem to have our way of celebrating the longest Christmas season ever—with Christmas carols airing as early as the beginning of the "ber" months in September, winding up to a harrum.

I asked foreign exchange student from Mexico how they will celebrate Christmas away from home.

"This year will be different because my family and I will be spending Christmas separately," said Yoshiara Tundra of International Christian University in

CHRISTMAS AWAY/2b

MARION Weber (center) with fellow French exchange students, enjoy visiting the Philippines' pristine beaches as right, Tsubasa Tanaka meets Manobo from the highland tribes of Lucban.

EMBLEMATHEME Seniors at this year's Kasalo, the annual Christmas lantern parade of UP Mindanao

Warm Christmas at UP Mindanao

Laughter, music, dance, lanterns–and intimate camaraderie

By Jean Ramon P Bago
Contributor

STEPPING AT UP Mindanao always feels like one is home.

The relatively low number of students (compared to the bustling Diliman campus) makes every interaction, whether in the classroom or on the hallway, personal and warm. Back in college, I lived through this kind of campus lifestyle for five years and it seems, today, there is no end to it.

The freshmen are welcomed excitedly by the seniors. "Freshies," in return, do the same to new students the next year. UPMin only has three colleges (humanities and social sciences; sciences and mathematics; and management), and this is why every student is a familiar face. The faculty can always be engaged in light and funny conversation when you bump into them in the canteen or anywhere on campus.

WARM/E2

KLARISSA Concepcion shows Lotagar-Lanuling society's Christmas lantern; below, Alpha Phi Omega's parol

tyler
R-1 Level Powerplant Mall, Rockwell Center, Makati City
Level 3 Shangri-La Plaza Mall, Mandaluyong City
2F Glorietta 4, Ayala Center, Makati City
Ayala Department Store, Greenbelt 5, Makati City

12 stylish days

For GIRLS:

1 SHIRT with cowl collar, Forever 21

2 KNITS polka-dot vest, CPS Chops

3 KNITTED vest with cut-out hem, F&S

4 TRIBAL-PRINT wedge booties, Aldo

5 SLEEVELESS floral jumpsuit, CPS Chops

6 GLITTER knitted cardigan, Harbench

7 METALLIC strappy gladiator heels, Parisi

8 RUFFLED chiffon skirt, CPS Chops

9 CROCHET skinny-green carrot pants, Human

10 BLACK leather wedge booties, Aldo

11 PRINTED sleeveless, Harbench

12 TRIBAL-PRINT scarf, Aldo

Maximize your wardrobe and wallet by mixing and matching basic pieces to create different holiday looks

By Mai Legarde
Contributor

[illegible] to be pals, so put together enough outfits to take you over each and every holiday event in style, said the Nova Twins.

As fashion bloggers, my boyfriend Jiggs and I often need to come up with a variety of ensembles to wear to meetings and events. We put ourselves on a tight shopping budget and used our wardrobe-maximizing skills to come up with 12 outfits from 12 basic pieces.

All you need are basics you can get from affordable brands, or from your own closet. For accessorizing, we used the same pieces to mix and match. Try it out with your own items and you might just join the club.

Warm Christmas at UP Mindanao

From page E1

During the Christmas season, even if the breeze blows a little too chilly, smiles become warmer and happier, especially on Rotsidy's in Brown wood that closely translates as "bonfire" or "Tagpuro-an". UP-Men's annual Christmas festive parade.

It's that time of the year when the university's campus is filled with laughter, music, dance, and Christmas lights and lanterns.

Lanzon parade

This year's theme focused on "Painting the Real Meaning of Christmas." Over 22 lanzons created by students to promote messages painted their way around Diliman Mindanao, with students, faculty and members communities trailing behind.

The student organizers of the BS Biology program (Biological Society) won the lanzons design contest. They told the person of the year, where the entire theme was meant to reflect the differences people have. Despite these differences, we still celebrate as a union what makes us human - the company of each other.

The highly anticipated dance contest saw the victory of the members of Communication Guild (BA Communication Arts) program. The awarded performance by Street of Age Boulevard from which was the second place, while Food technology students (FSE) from Institute of Food Technologists

Lambda Chapter) were third.

The lone varsity BA Communication (pre-arts) in the event chose the club-fusion) concept captured the hearts of the students. The members showcased quirky dance moves, while and cheers about many on Christmas.

As festivities came to an end late to the evening, the lanzons were lit up and dig forced in exact topic contest of the campus to recognized as why we should look forward to next year's Christmas in the university.

There was no mishmosp of gifts or prizes to entertainment while celebrations, but we took comfort in the idea that the day we had with each other are as already the greatest gift.

COMMUNICATION Arts students show off quirky classic for the street dance (Isabel Arabit) contest.

PASTEL lanzon at Philippine Eucalyptus Admin-Log Movement Inc. PHOTO BY MARIA ELA TO

Globe iPhone 4S comes unlimited mobile data package

Globe Telecom formally launched the new iPhone 4S featuring exclusive perks for its valued subscribers, which include unlimited access to social networking.

In the event held in Manila on December 16, Globe opened its doors to early iPhone4S enthusiasts, who lined up for the launch of the device. Philippine President Benigno "Noynoy" Aquino III took part in the event as he was the first Globe subscriber to receive an iPhone 4S from Globe at its media launch.

"With our years of partnership with Apple, we can deliver their top-of-the-line products and services and offer the best and most value-added support specific to iPhone 4S. From our store personnel who can provide the latest in technical and after-sales assistance, to our aggressive rollout of the 3G/HSPA+ 42Mbps high-speed network to bring you the fastest mobile Internet experience available in the Philippines, Globe is more than ready to launch the most anticipated phone and make another milestone in this already exciting partnership," said Globe President and CEO Ernest Cu. "We are also proud to announce our commercial launch of Globe LTE, the country's first and only 4G LTE network, which will be initially available in select areas in Metro Manila and Cebu."

Globe subscribers can avail of the iPhone 4S under its innovative postpaid plans bundled with unlimited Internet and social surfing. With Globe unlimited data, the iPhone 4S is a data-intensive smartphone, will users have access to all their favorite sites such as Yahoo! and Gmail, Facebook, photo sharing sites and instant messaging services. Globe's postpaid subscribers do not have to worry about any additional charges on their bills because of mobile data, thus letting them enjoy their iPhone 4S limitless," added Ortiz.

Among the other exclusive benefits for Globe subscribers are the one-day trade-in program for existing iPhone users under Globe's postpaid corporate plans, who wish to upgrade their mobile devices for the ultimate experience. Owners of Blackberry and iPhone 3G, iPhone 3GS and iPhone 4 can avail existing mobile plan trade-in rates at a specified trade-in value, which may be applied and traded as a discount for qualified purchases of authentic iPhone 4S at designated Globe stores and branch centers until December 31.

Globe is also offering the iPhone 4S for free to new subscribers who will avail of Globe's 3G/HSPA+ devices when they purchase an original iPhone 4 case. The promo is exclusive to available until December 31.

Another exclusive feature for Globe subscribers is the activity of the iPhone 4S users to receive notifications for free GM alerts via Globe Internet 411. By adding their iPhone 4S from Globe subscribers can enjoy games, social networking, and other applications and save to spare 30 for free by simply sending [illegible]

Prospective and current Globe subscribers using their iPhone 4S or want to check their balance or data available for free. Just text BALANCE to 2222 for free to check their balance.

In the words of graduate Globe users the good deals are with its equally amazing postpaid plans that are customizable, accessible and affordable. Globe's Bro 30 bundle, Plus 1500 Platinum, Double Globe - allow for free to all network.

Do you or group consider the power to choose their own plans, they can also select their iPhone 4S device through various options - they can select picture and video camera options and other features that their iPhone as delivered by calling the Customer Sales Hotline at 730-1000, or visiting their nearest Globe branch.

Globe is also offering an exclusive promo and scheme for its loyal subscribers where they can avail of a 12 month 0% interest installment plan without any credit card computation. It also partnered with Ayala affiliate Bank of the Philippine Islands (BPI) for a one month 0% interest payment scheme.

Celebrate cherished Filipino Christmas traditions with Blend 45

Widest 45 years of coffee making has taught Blend 45 coffee reflects the typical Pinoy spirit that is synonymous to close-knit Christmas traditions

World Debate 'Olympics' to be held in the Philippines

By Sixbon Wolfgang A. Isidro
Contributor

THIS DECEMBER, De La Salle University (DLSU) will host the "De La Salle Worlds" or "World's Debates," which is the debate equivalent of the Olympics. It is one of the largest academic gatherings in the world, with participants from the 234 top universities of the world coming from 50 countries. Universities included are Harvard, Cambridge, Stanford, among others.

The De La Salle Worlds preliminary rounds will be held on Dec. 29-31, 9 a.m. to 9 p.m., at the De La Salle University Manila auditorium and PBEI, while the semi- and grand finals will be on Jan. 3, 5 to 8 p.m., at the Philippine International Convention Center's auditorium and PBEI.

The grand finals will also be aired live on National Broadcasting Network (NBN) Channel 4.

To get to either the preliminaries and/or the finals, please visit www.dlsuworlds.com, which also provides instructions on how to get tickets. Or e-mail info@dlsu-worlds.com.

Intelligent discussion

When we usually hear the word debate, we think of two people arguing violently, trying to overpower each other's already loud voices. We'd rather be in a relaxed environment, and yes, we'd rather not waste our time, as well we don't even care about us aren't fanatics.

Debate De Leon, the convener of the De La Salle Worlds, describes debate differently. For him, it's an intelligent "discussion where people talk about the rules regarding a particular issue or topic... Debate is the conversation of democracy." It's a great means by which to raise awareness, spin wins and heads. In fact, debate is what our economy, congressmen and policy-makers do when they make laws or policies.

It's not enough to discuss things, though. For as De Leon says, "Bad policies come from badly debated topics." If we, as a nation, want to improve, the policies we have, we only so we can learn to discuss our topics well, we must learn to debate well. We can have a head start with that by watching good debates.

Global mindset

De La Salle Worlds aims to expose Filipinos to the best young minds of the world, coming from different cultures, world views and thinking. Many of the great debaters of yesterday have become today's CEOs, prime ministers and world leaders. So if you go to De La Salle Worlds, chances are you'll be watching and learning from tomorrow's world leaders—maybe the next

OUR FILIPINO Debate Olympians: The participating schools are ADMU, CSB, FEU, UPM, UPD, Xavier University and UP Visayas.

grime minister of Thailand, the next CEO of the big multinational company, or maybe even the next president of the United States!

Learning from these people will equip the Filipino youth to make our country more progressive and enable them to compete with the rest of the world's youth. It would also help them form a great learning experience for both students and professionals.

15 topics

There are a maximum of 15 world debate topics, ranging from business and economics to fashion and many more. The semi-finals will also have a chance to interact with the debaters.

"The aim is hospitable now," says De Leon, "but that should not take first place before anything else. We want cross-pollination of ideas. If we want to improve, we have to let our ideas out. Filipinos are responsive by nature, but when they talk about serious stuff, they don't talk. They should extend their expressive nature to intellectual discussions. Our nation's collective wisdom and wealth of experiences is really something worth listening to."

So—do come to this event. Contribute to Philippine development by learning to debate well today.

Christmas away from home

From page B1

Tokyo. Her parents are in Japan, while his brother is also studying abroad. It's his first time in a foreign exchange student, living alone, but he feels a lesser Christmas here in Manila than in Japan.

"I live in Tokyo, where people are always in a rush, but the Filipinos are so welcoming and very friendly," he said. Tanako will be spending Christmas day with a Filipino family for the rest of the school holiday season. He will spend it attending food destinations, just like what other exchange students do.

By this time, it's almost snowing and people are bundled up drinking hot chocolate, but not in the Philippines," said Carlos Vino, an Ecuadorian student at Universidad Carlos III in Madrid, Spain.

"It feels more like summer here than Christmas," he said. But unlike in Spain, where they give importance to "Papa Noel," here in Manila, he observed, Christmas is more about the family.

Jesse Lee is away from home. But will be spending Christmas with other exchange students and friends from Spain. They will be traveling to Sorsogon for Christmas, spend the Holiday in Leyte and will be going to a trip to Panama.

"Christmas in France does not begin so early in September, unlike in the Philippines, we start after Halloween. All of the houses are decorated on the morning of December 25," Christmas Eve Wallet, having a double supper in Soriano Pe and Sydenham in the in. But since she's Germans as well, her family celebrates it here.

She thinks spending Christmas "without my family is horrible," so it's a good thing her family will be flying in from France to celebrate Christmas with her. Nadine has three more months here before she goes back home. And only after a semester, she has fond memories of the Philippines and considers it her home.

TECHIE GIFTS FOR THE FAMILY

Still looking for that special gift that would make Christmas extra special for you and your family? Well, if you're into techie devices (or most people are nowadays!) then read on as we have the low-down on the top PCs of the season. And as a bonus, purchasing any of these PCs with Windows 7 also means that you get the chance to join the Windows Family selfie and win a 2012 Mitsubishi Montero Sport, a trip for 4 to Singapore and a family package of Unlimited HTC Rocket phones.

MULTI-MEDIA PCS FOR THE KIDS THAT MAKE LEARNING FUN

Music lovers will love the HP Pavilion dm1, equipped with Beats Audio™ for a studio-quality entertainment packed with the HP Pavilion ergonomics.

The Lenovo IdeaPad U300s Ultrabook exudes style and quality with smart technologies, like predictable assistant in a chic design. It boasts of long battery life with up to 8 hours usage and 20 days standby time.

THE ALL-IN-ONES: FULL FUNCTION PC, TV AND MEDIA PLAYER WITH AMAZING TOUCH CAPABILITIES

The 23-inch HP Touchsmart 520 will be perfect in your living room, kitchen or even the car. Given it has a non-reclining design and, however, crystal clear audio quality courtesy of Beats Audio technology.

The first touch screen all-in-one PC equipped with Windows Touch system for the first touch screen all-in-one PC equipped with Windows Touch system for the first time, bringing the touch experience to your home. It uses Edge Sensor technology that gives you the ability to navigate your home with a swipe of the finger. Use it to the extended fingertips.

For more information on Microsoft retail promos, products, and packages, visit www.microsoft.com.ph/family. For the complete list of Microsoft Bar Partners, visit http://www.microsoft.com.ph/msapartner.

Microsoft Windows 7

BPI
Let's make it easy.

Holiday Feast of Family Treats

To Celebrate the Joys of the Season

From hearty feasts shared over gales of laughter, to that lingering sense of excitement and cheer in the air, there's no denying that the Yuletide season has finally arrived. And since all roads lead home this Christmas, BPI has paved the way **with tons of real thrills and sumptuous treats – the kind that you can share and enjoy with the whole family.**

Kick off your celebration of the year's biggest feast with a gastronomic experience unlike any other. Just like the many stories you'd like to share with long-lost friends and relatives, BPI has also thrown out a smorgasbord of delicacies to add flavor to every conversation. Enjoy heaping servings of discounts from various restaurants anywhere in the country, or get freebies from your favorite fastfood brand wherever you want to energize yourself after endless bouts of holiday activities.

We'll also help take on the challenge of finding the perfect gifts, ones that truly reflect how you value your family. Whether it's the trendiest clothes for Mom and Ate, or the coolest gadgets for Dad and Kuya, we've partnered with your favorite brands to make shopping a breeze. Each use of your card also **gives you access to the most exclusive discounts and privileges** wherever you do some Christmas shopping in our partner stores. Now that's a gift that never stops giving.

What's more, BPI makes it possible for you and your loved ones to **enjoy the best Christmas ever without having to spread your budget too thin.** Enjoy Real 0% installment deals and low rates on BPI's Express Credit-to-Cash facility for a shopping and dining experience that's high on value – not on prices. That way you'll have less time worrying about the bill, and more time relishing those precious moments of togetherness.

Simply because here at BPI, we understand that while enjoyable, riding the holiday rush may also feel a little too overwhelming. It's our simple way of giving you a pat on the back after enduring the almost unbearable holiday traffic, crowded malls and busy schedules, **all for the sake of chasing what really matters most – precious moments spent with family.**

So sit back, relax and enjoy the rest of the holidays from purchase to perk, one loved one after the other. It can only happen with BPI Express Credit.

Feast on Food to Fill Everyone's Hearts

Wonderful conversations over a smorgasbord of mouthwatering dishes – that's a classic when it comes to the Filipino way of spending time with family and friends. And because you've taken care of the stories to tell, BPI will take care of the feasts you can share.

Feast on More Affordable Deals

BPI makes it easier for you to cross things off your Christmas shopping list, with the best deals that add value to your money. Use your BPI Express Credit to avail of exclusive discounts, Real 0% installment offers and even convert your credit limit into cash.

After all, Christmas is meant to be celebrated with love and joy.

BPI

ENTERTAINMENT

Lira Soriano-G. Velarde

Actress Eugene Domingo

(What she's most thankful for as another year ends:) "My health and energy. To be always ready to rise and shine in the morning in a most precious gift. After hosting my bash while filming Ang Babae sa Septic Tank,' I was unable to move for almost two weeks." Beyond Jim Chuapo Jr.

CHEER FACTOR

What Hollywood stars look forward to this Christmas

FOR Kirsten Dunst, a true-crimming party!

ONLY IN HOLLYWOOD

Andrew Y. Nebalasca

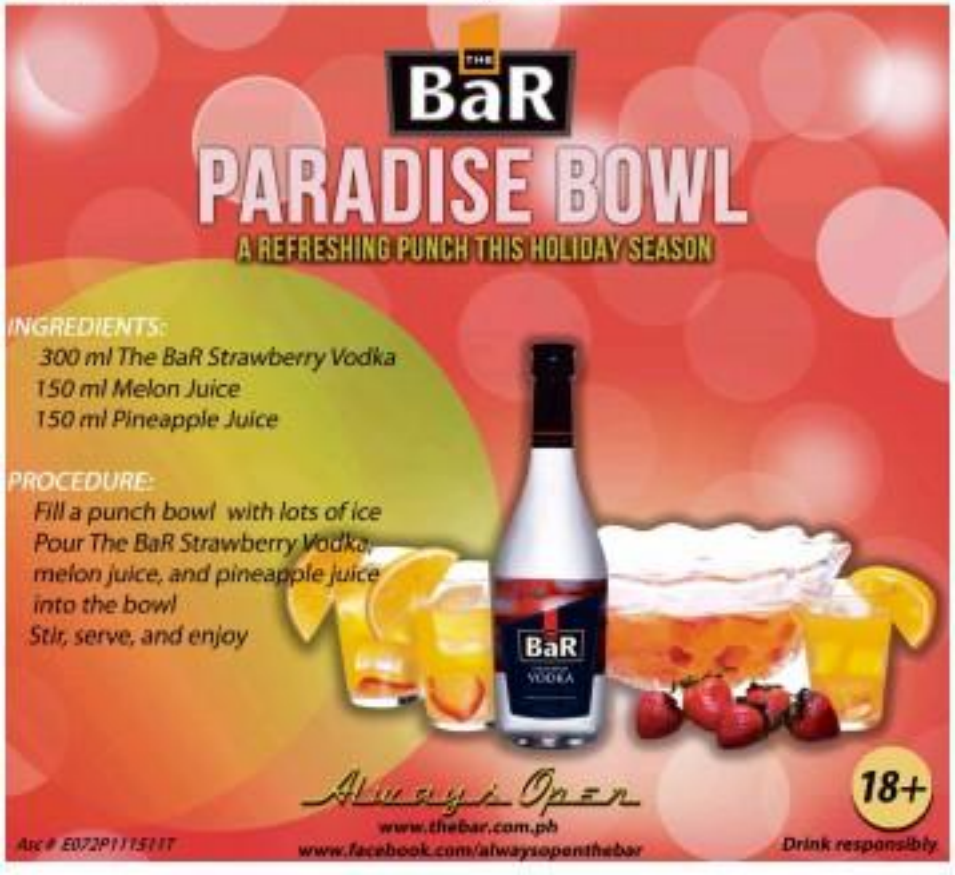
LOS ANGELES...We asked several stars about their Christmas plans. Their answers are as varied as their personalities and movie personas.

Charlize Theron

Golden Globe-listed actress noted on for Jason Reitman's "Young Adult"

"I really wanted to be away for the holidays but I'm working in London. I don't know where I'm going to wear this film. (Snow White and the Huntsman' with Kristen Stewart) and how exhausted I'm going to be. I'm playing it by ear.

"Every year I spend my Christmas differently. Sometimes I like to travel, sometimes I like to stay home and cook dinner. I didn't really grow up with Christmas being a specific thing because it's summer holiday in South Africa [where I was born]. We tend to load the car up and drive to the beach. Santa Claus puts on a Speedo and comes down the lagoon. That's very South African. We have barbecue and watermel...



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What Hollywood stars are planning for Christmas...

From page G1

on. For me, that's what Christmas always represents when I mean a child growing up. Not the toys, more and gifts. We didn't do any of that stuff."

Christian Bale

Star of 'Public Enemies' and 'The Flowers of War', a Golden Globe winning Christmas film

"Having just come off the mammoth movie ('The Dark Knight Rises'), our minds are more about getting away from it all. We are just getting over what that has happened to us in the last year, so I've really got no plans beyond that moment. But with a Scottish family (my wife Sibylle's 'Bale' is Gaelic), there's a different calendar so we always have two Christmases."

Michelle Williams

Holder (Marilyn Monroe in 'My Week with Marilyn')

"This movie (Dawn Porter's 'Do The Green and Powerful') that I've co-written just ahead of Christmas, so I'm afraid we're going to lag along on everybody else's holiday festivities. Inadvertently (she has a two and half year-old) his birthday became an easily forgotten date on my calendar. I'm still processing how family traditions and its how-ing to how to put a Christmas on a Thanksgiving spread. It's a little part-heads at this point.

"My mom's a consummate holiday organizer. I would like to wish more of Dad from my mom. Yes, I should."

Robin Williams

(first married to actor Susan Schneider last October)

"I just have to start looking for my kids to see what they would want for Christmas. It's weird now that they're so three. Zelda is 20, Zelda is 22 but Cody is 19. So buying a gift is like, 'How about a Pocket?' Or it's that shiny sheen of booze. 'Thanks, dad, for the apartment.' What do you get them when they're at that age?"

Naomi Watts

(stars in Clint Eastwood's 'J. Edgar')

"I grew up in England and then moved to Australia, so Christmas at the height was new to me around the age of 14 ... And then, living in New York for several years now, you do want to break up the hard winter. However, I think this year is going to be a relief (Christmas, that is) because I'm going to be filming in Australia so I'll enjoy a good length of summer there which will break up my routine."

Kirsten Dunst

(Justine in 'Melancholia')

"Not celebrate Christmas this, and Christmas Day. We do a nice trimming party. We get a big tree. There are usually lots of trees. We just have a lot of food. Tons of family around. Very simple, just like anyone else's."

Colin Firth

(currently starring in Tomas Alfredson's 'Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy')

"My wife Livia Giuggioli is Italian so we split Christmas time between England and Italy. There are surprisingly similar traditions. It's about the tree, stockings, turkey and some of the family. Italy is exactly the same without the turkey."

E-mail the columnist at rempatio_2005@yahoo.com. Follow him on http://twitter.com/rempatiolives.

ROBIN Williams' "Thanks, dad, for the apartment..."

NAOMI Watts: "It's going to be a little Christmas this year."

MICHELLE Williams: "It gets harsh at this point."

CHARLIZE Theron: "I'm piloting it by ear."

COLIN Firth: Time split between England and Italy.

CHRISTIAN Bale: Always two Christmases.

Gerard Butler OK after rescue

BUTLER "shaken," ...

HALF MOON BAY, California—Gerard Butler is OK after being rescued from a crosswaves California surf break known for its nine-high waves.

The 42-year-old star of "Of Mice and Mavericks" was held underwater Sunday afternoon when a set of waves rolled in. He was washed through some rocks while cushioned in his surfboard. A safety patrolman on a Jet Ski swooped in and picked him up.

Geographer andre Zack Hirschbeck told The San Mateo County Times newspaper that the actor was shaken but not seriously injured. Butler was taken by ambulance to a hospital for examination and later released.

"Of Mice and Mavericks" is about surfer Jay Moriarity, who died in a free-diving accident in 2001 when he was 23.

Butler's publicist Rupert Fowler didn't immediately respond to an e-mail message sent on Tuesday.

Hirschbeck said Butler had not surfed much before the movie, but had made an effort to improve his skills for the film.

"Everything he was doing was within reason," Hirschbeck said. "Basically, there's nothing you can do." AP

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ENTERTAINMENT

METRO MANILA FILM FESTIVAL

(We are running this guide to help moviegoers plan their holiday cinema runs. The 37th MMFF runs from Dec. 25 to Jan. 7, 2013.)

My Househusband: Ikaw Na!

Directed by Jose Javier Reyes; stars Judy Ann Santos, Ryan Agoncillo, Eugene Domingo, Bimbo Nicolas and Ellen Adarna

Twinkle is an otherwise normal housewife happy when Rod (Agoncillo) loses his job as a bank manager. This leaves his wife Mia (Santos), who gave up a promising career in order for her family to step up. As Mia's insensitive job becomes real, Rod is forced to take care of the house and the kids, especially after their trusted housekeeper goes on an emergency leave.

Trapped at home, Rod befriends their next-door neighbor named Aida (Domingo) who is a kept woman. As the friendship develops, Mia feels suspicious. When Rod decides to try his luck in Canada, he is surprised to know that Mia would willingly give up her work and prepare for the family to move elsewhere. At the same time, Rod makes Aida realize that she, too, has to take a hold of her life and work on her own.

"This is a reunion of sorts with Direk Joey," said Santos of Reyes, who also directed her and Agoncillo in "Kasal, Kasali, Kasalo."

The season's spirit turns sadness around for two stars Cheer Factor /H3

Benefit shows for 'Sendong' victims Showtime /H5

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The Perfect Venue

'Tis the season of cheer

Stars show how the Christmas spirit triumphs over sadness

By Bayani San Diego Jr.

TWO GMA-7 stars show how the goodwill that the Christmas season spreads can diminish the pain of personal tragedies.

Actress Ice Calimlim and diva Yeng Constantino have both decided to be models of triumph over sadness.

It won't be a blue Christmas for Ice although she's mourning the recent passing of her dad, drowning, explains Fil-American Live-in-Orlando.

She told Inquirer that she was spending the holidays exactly the same way as when her father was around—surrounded by family and friends. "In the past, I always went to midnight Mass and had media noche with my dad. I remember only a few Christmases when we were apart."

The missing is most intense, Ice said, when those his friends remind her how well-loved and respected in the industry her father had been. It is a level of esteem of the lives of few. (1)

Helping her cope, she pointed out, is work that keeps her preoccupied. Tomorrow, she'll join the annual parade of floats for the Metro Manila Film Festival. She is in the cast of Carlo J. Caparas' "Ang Panday 2," (the year's entry from GMA Films and Imus Productions).

"Hopefully, the parade will last, uh, early so I can rush back home, have Christmas dinner and hang out with my sister Jackie (Ice)," Ice said.

Following her dad's burial, Ice spent time with her godparents and their daughter in Dubai. "I grew up with them," she said. It was a much needed R&R, to sort things out."

For the long Halloween weekend, she traveled to Singapore with her "Eat Bulaga!" colleagues, her now family.

Sharing the victory

Rihlia is celebrating the season of giving in her own way. Only days after the Cagayan de Oro flash floods, the aspiring singer, who hails from Iligan (sister city), was the GMA-7 reality talent search.

Her uncle perished in a rear crash at the height of tropical storm "Sendong." Recalled Rihlia: "I was devastated, but I dedicated my performance to my uncle and province mates."

Her mentor, singer Kiko Segovia, never mentored in her corniness (but Rihlia, though only 16, had the winning factor so early in the auditions. "She sang Britney's 'Halo.' But I asked her to rap, and then sing a Lea Salonga song, so I could gauge her versatility."

TV host Ogie Alcasid noted that Rihlia "remained consistent."

But Rihlia's powerful rendition Lovely Underneath from Dingdong Dantes-Jennylyn Mercado film Bekis, she won P1 million in cash and a month-and-a-half contract with Viva.

"I'm proud of what she is as a person," Segovia said. "She is sharing the prize with Lovely."

Rihlia's confession: this: "We're not rich, but my relatives (some have to Canada and some Saudi) in Dubai help my mom, who's unemployed, (only) much a lot of financial help."

Specifically, Krissa has invited her mom up to stay with her in the condo unit. "We will decide all (options)," Ice explained.

She'd like to extend the same generosity to her distressed kababayans in Cagayan de Oro by volunteering with the Philippine Red Cross and the Rizzoni Foundation in their relief efforts.

"PROTEGE" Jhong Rihlia Reid with mentor Kiko Segovia

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2) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
3) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
4) NEW YEAR'S EVE
5) MIRACLES
6) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4 (3D)
7) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
GREENBELT 1
1) NEW YEAR'S EVE
2) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
GREENBELT 3
1) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
2) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
3) NEW YEAR'S EVE
4) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
5) MIRACLES
ALABANG TOWN CENTRE
1) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
2) IRON KING (3D)
3) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4 (3D)
4) MIRACLES
5) NEW YEAR'S EVE
AYALA CENTER CEBU
1) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
2) MIRACLES
3) IRON KING (3D) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
4) NEW YEAR'S EVE
MARKET! MARKET!
1) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4 (3D)
2) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
3) NEW YEAR'S EVE
4) IRON KING (3D)
5) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
6) MIRACLES
7) RESERVED
TRINOMA
1) MIRACLES
2) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
3) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
4) IRON KING (3D)
5) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
6) NEW YEAR'S EVE
7) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
ABREEZA
1) IRON KING (3D), MIRACLES, MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
2) MIRACLES
3) MISSION IMPOSSIBLE 4
4) NEW YEAR'S EVE
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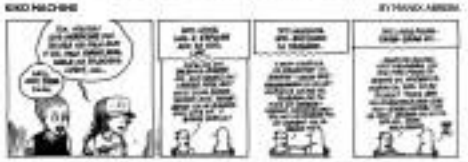

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Concepts Sudoku — By Dave Green

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		2		3		1		
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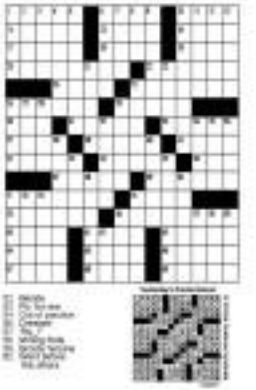

Still unraveling the 'Bigfoot' enigma

By Oliver M. Pulumbarit
Correspondent

"WE HAVE been doing Bigfoot expeditions for years," Matt Moneymaker, president and founder of the Bigfoot Field Researchers Organization, told the business in a phone interview. "We have been taking people out to places where there had been sightings, and we're the only ones who will do that."

In the Internet Planet show "Finding Bigfoot," the group searches for the elusive bipedal creature (also known as Sasquatch, Yeti or Abominable Snowman) and goes on a cross-country expedition intended to answer questions posed by the odd, baffling mystery.

Investigating what witnesses consider as Sasquatch sightings, Moneymaker and his crew interview locals and examine evidence, sometimes that bring them to some possible forest habitats in Georgia, Washington, and Alaska, among other places.

"We're not talking about a single mythical thing/monster figure," he said. "We're talking about a species that people have spotted in different places around the world."

The biggest worry of the team is getting injured in the woods at night. "We worry about getting a cold or the eye, which can happen very easily when you're sneaking around in the woods and chasing things in the dark in a forest. Then the scary things obviously are mountain lions, big cats. Big cats are far more dangerous."

The Bigfoot has long been described as a very tall, hairy creature that partly resembles an ape and has humanlike movements. Sightings have been reported in Malaysia, Southeast Vietnam, India and China, aside from the United States. There have also been a couple of hoaxes, according to Moneymaker, but the researcher stated that there are also records of eyewitness accounts dating back to "hundreds of years."

"I guess back way beyond, the Adena didn't start until the late 1960s, but there are very good descriptions of these things in artwork and stuff going back to the 1800s in the United States."

Many supposed sightings (as is said to be glimpses of boats or other anomalies, but those don't dismiss the group from continuing their searches. That's what we try to investigate. When we go out, when we talk to witnesses or we get to a location, there are a few things we consider in those situations," Moneymaker said. "It's the circumstances and it's the person. It's just like what a lawyer would do in court. What you believe you saw, is that what really happened? So we have to analyze it that way and you end up still with a lot of them where there's so many they could have been looking at a bear."

Moneymaker added that most people from all over the world now believe in the existence of the enigmatic species.

"I think it's a good thing," he said. "I guess [it means] they're hearing, not just that some people in some place [believe] in something, but that many people in many places are saying they're seeing something. That's what's happening here. It's not a matter of 'Do a lot of Americans believe they exist?' No, but the amazing thing is how many hoaxes exist that they have seen one up close or from a distance. That's the fascinating thing because it's not rare to happen. All we see have a certain amount of witnesses, then you usually have to listen to what they've seen and see if there's all doing the same thing."

And if a live Bigfoot were to be discovered, caught and studied, it would significantly affect human beings. "Here's the analogy: the discovery of King Tut's tomb in terms of chauvinism in the 1920s had this very big impact in the West when all of a sudden there was this huge sudden appreciation of the antiquities," Moneymaker explained. "I think it will definitely create a resurgence of appreciation for the natural world, maybe the ancient world, too. It's a benefit to you. It's a very healthy thing and it really makes you appreciate your own land, whatever it is, or a very rare wouldn't have done before because 'you would never have made the effort' to go to some of those wild places if not for those things."

"Finding Bigfoot" airs Mondays (10 p.m.), Wednesdays (8 p.m.), and Saturdays (7:30 p.m.) on Animal Planet.

BIGFOOT hunter Matt Moneymaker (right), with his team (from left): Cliff Barackman, Jeremy "Bobo" Fay and Ramon Hollatel

The very tall, hairy creature resembles an ape and has humanlike movements

Garbage story

Craig Peluscio's family uses garbage as a wellspring of hope for their otherwise empty stomachs.

In the documentary "Bulog Jagpag" on the program "Ikaw na Bahay," host Rhea Santos accompanies Craig and her family while scouring the garbage bins of the metro to search for their next meal.

The doers, which shows how these leftover food to "jagpag" are cooked, eaten and sometimes sold to other people, airs tonight after "Talad" on GMA-7.

Best of 'Kapuso Mo'

This Christmas and New Year's Eve, Jessica Soho recounts the year that was, featuring the most interesting lads and most hilarious stories, in "The Best of Kapuso Mo, Jessica Soho 2011."

The two-part yearend special airs tomorrow at 8:35 p.m. and Dec. 31 at 7:15 p.m. on GMA-7.

Massacre account

"The Batanduhan with Boy Abunda" replays the episode featuring Maguindanao Gov. Toto Mangudadatu tomorrow at 11:30 p.m. after "Banana Split" on ABS-CBN.

According to host Abunda, the grieving of Mangudadatu was one of the most riveting episodes he has done so for the show. "The interviews was done at the height of the Maguindanao massacre issue and I remember being in just constant shout the issue," Abunda recounted. "I was ready to listen to his story."

The show features "batanduhan" Zaldy Dong, Mike Lopez, Dr. Jose Sipe, Mitz Justine Borja, Cathy Conde and Reynaldo Momay-Conde, daughter of a massacre victim.

Benefit shows for 'Sendong' victims at Merk's, Rockwell

A BENEFIT show for victims of Tropical Storm "Sendong" will be held tonight at Merk's Place, featuring The Elms Omni Band with Lenny de Jesus and Russell Jr. Respicio, and guest performer John Lennox. Cocktail food will be served from 7 p.m. onwards. Live shows start at 9 and 11 p.m. Merk's Place is at the 2nd floor, Galleria Arcade (above Ralph's Diners and Cryptara Savings Bank), 9th Avenue Road (formerly Daang Bakal), Makati.

'Helping Mindanao Now'

"Helping Mindanao Now" another benefactor for the Buddhood victims, will be held on Dec. 25, 6 p.m. to 12 a.m., at the Rockwell Tent, Makati. Participating artists include the AMP Big Band, Arthur Hovening, Albert de Vera, Aguinaldo, Hope Castro, Dulce with Jovic Aquino, Guerrero, Brenda del Rosario, Mikey Bustos, Jeannie Tinagco and Henry Rattinag. Mon David, The Company, Inner Lapuna, Louie, Lory and Becky's Music Making Company, Edru Abubakar, Akia Tequenza, Nicole & Carlo Lucchesi, Noel Cabangon, Lolo Mojares, Edith Gonzalez and Tess Jacob.

'Concert by the Lake'

SHOW TIME

Billy Crawford, Kyla, Nikki Gil, Kris Lawrence, Isabella, Sheila Valderrama, Vicente Barrun and Kuh Ledesma perform in "Concert by the Lake," 6 p.m., Dec. 30 at the Evolving Center Dasmariñas in Waterfall, Laguna. The show is part of the ongoing "Gifts of Green: Christmas at Waterfall" series of activities which include a charade competition and Christmas banners. Log on to waterfall.ph or call 0917-5275688.

New Year's Eve shows

New Year's Eve, Dec. 31, at the Peninsula Manila features the following entertainment:

- Hyperfunk and a 19-piece band at The Lobby
- Hyperfunk and Mojo Avenue at Salon de Ning

Call 887-2888 ext. 7401 or 6894.

True Faith at Acacia Hotel

The new Acacia Hotel Manila (2400 East Asia Drive cor. Commerce Ave. Filinvest Corp. City, Alabang) presents its

Didi Campos Vis among the more than 20 artists performing in Dec. 26 at the Rockwell Tent, a fundraiser for victims of the recent flashfloods in Mindanao.

"Flashback to the '70s" starts 9 p.m. with the band True Faith down party on Dec. 31, 8:30 p.m. Call 720-2000 or 566-1000.

ISABELLA

MIKEE DI

Musical series keeps people entertained at theme park

Enchanted Kingdom, now on its 16th year, trains its own talents for special concept shows

"ENCHANTE Christmas The Musical"

By Marisel R. Cruz

STA. ROSA, Laguna—"We cultivate and train talents. We want them to be world-class," said Enchanted Kingdom president and chair Mario Mamon, who is supported by a production team led by musical director Tata Dumolo.

Mamon said he tries to get in-house talents as much as possible. "In fact, one-third of the production is employed by EK," he said (upon-Entertainment during a recent Media Appreciation Day held at the theme and amusement park here. "We keep guests entertained with new musical presentations every couple of months."

This was the rationale behind the creation of "The Enchanted," a musical series conceptualized in 2006 by Faustino and his wife Hubie, now head of EK's entertainment and creative division.

This year, "Enchanted: Melon" ran for the whole month of February, followed by "Enchanted: Under the Sea," from May to June. To celebrate Philippine Independence Day, EK presented "Enchanted: OPM" in July. Currently being staged at the EK Globe's first is "Enchanted Christmas: The Musical."

"Enchanted" is a French term which means "It's nice to meet you," explained Mamon.

To add flavor to the shows, EK also hires professional talents like those who appear in variety and talent programs on TV, said Mamon.

He added that the Zion Show, made up of the acrobatic husband-and-wife team of Isaac and Jocelyn Velasco, are performing at EK all weekends of December. The duo is hailed as the 13th Hall of Famer of the reality talent show "Talentadong Pinoy" on TV5.

Also performing at EK's Sandstorm is young saxophonist and clarinet player Ian Jacinto, grandson of musician Ramon "RJ" Jacinto, as well as singer Ana Segovia and MYMP.

The Media Appreciation Day, which was part of EK's 16th anniversary celebrations, began on Dec. 17 as 4:30 p.m. with welcome remarks from Mamon, his wife and EK chief operating officer Cynthia Mamon, and public relations head Anna Maria Pesigan. EK ambassadors Hiro the Wizard, Princess Victoria and Little Miss EK Colleen Pinedla Mercado greeted members of the entertainment press and their families.

Several newspapers were hired for their "invaluable contribution through the active publication of press releases" and for making EK No. 1 in terms of media exposure share in 2011.

The program ended with a short performance from the cast of "Enchanted Christmas: The Musical."

"We take extra effort to conceptualizing our shows because we want to add value for money," shared Mamon. "We plan to do this for 16 more years. I always remember what Walt Disney, everyone's idol in the amusement industry, said after 10 years of Disneyland in California, that development in Disney never ends. It's the same here in Enchanted Kingdom; every month, every year, once we come up with something new, we will implement it."

E-mail: mcruz@inquirer.com.ph

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FRIDAY, DECEMBER 23, 2011

PROFESSIONAL SERVICES

INVITATIONS

SPOT SAMPLE

REAL ESTATE FOR SALE

CONDO/TOWNHOUSE

LOT

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

APARTMENT

LOAN & MORTGAGE

OFFICE SPACE FOR RENT

TRANSPORTATION FOR SALE

CARS

TRANSPORTATION FOR RENT

CAR LOAN

GENERAL ITEMS FOR SALE

MEDICAL INSTRUMENTS

WANTED TO BUY

ROLEX
LOAD WATCH

INVITATION TO PRE-QUALIFY AND TO BID

PACKAGE NO.	ITEM NO.	DESCRIPTION	QTY	ABC (VAT Inclusive)
1	1	AUX FAC, HLV, 333 Sampaloc	10,000	4,510,000.00
	2	AUX F.S.H.4 HDR, 333Sampaloc 11	10,000	1,748,810.00
	3a	AUX F.S.H.4 HDR, 13Kv, Insulated H.D.C., 333 Cam.		10,430,348.00
	3b	Cable Trench, Cut Works, Cond.1,000mm, 333 Cam.	2,000	4,614,000.00
2	4	Sec. Transformer (Electronic), 37.5 KVA (1400/230), 333cs	1	1,000,000.00
	5	Sec. Transformer (Electronic), 37.5 KVA (1400/230), 333cs	1	1,000,000.00
	6	Sec. Transformer (Electronic), 37.5 KVA (1400/230), 333cs	1	1,000,000.00
3	7	Cutout & Isolator Comb., 13Kvmp, HD Change Only, 333 Cam.	25	175,000.00
	8	Cutout & Isolator Comb., 13Kvmp, HD Change Only, 333 Cam.	3	49,000.00
4	9	1.25 Kvlar, Solid Core, Transformer type, Pinnacle type	1,248	3,000,000.00
	10	Kvlar Jacket, HD Cond. C, 1400, 333cs, Medium Compression	2,745	5,490,000.00
	11	Power Wire, Plastic type with steel spine (and reinforced)	2,745	1,245,000.00
5	12	1 Phase, Dual 240, 415, 3000, 10-15kVA, Pinnacle type (c) 4 Core	475	950,000.00
	13	1 Phase, Set Mounted, Underground, 5cm dia, Mid Body, w/enclosure and Slot Stock	3	210,000.00
	14	Current Transformer, Dual Core, 50/5/5.0, 15mc, outdoor type	10	900,000.00
	15	Current Transformer, TCC, 15mc outdoor type	10	800,000.00
6	16	Concrete Pole, 40' Class 2, Min. Ratings Load 1400kg, 333 Cam.	10	400,000.00
	17	Concrete Pole, 40' Class 3, Min. Ratings Load 1400kg, 333 Cam.	10	1,000,000.00
	18	Concrete Pole, 40' Min. Ratings Load 1400kg, 333 Cam.	10	1,000,000.00
7	19	Steel Pole, 30' Class 2, Min. Yield Strength 345MPa (use MEA specs)	75	1,500,000.00
	20	Steel Pole, 30' Class 3, Min. Yield Strength 345MPa (use MEA specs)	80	1,600,000.00
	21	Steel Pole, 40' Class 2, Min. Yield Strength 345MPa (use MEA specs)	10	1,000,000.00
8	22	New Line maintenance for distribution line	1.25	1,000,000.00
9	23	Tree Trimming/Clearing (with supporting documents & evaluation)	1.00	2,000,000.00
TOTAL				39,644,703.00

Bid documents will be issued after passing the eligibility to bid and upon payment of Two Thousand Pesos (Php 2000.00) non-refundable before the pre-bid conference.

Acceptance of Letter of Intent and receipt of eligibility requirements	December 13-16, 2011
Issuance of eligibility to bid	December 19-23, 2011
Pre-Bid Conference	Dec. 20, 2011 @ 9:00 AM in Bataan Peninsula State University, Balanga City, Bataan
Opening of Bid Documents & Sealed Bid	January 13, 2012 @ 9:00 AM in the same venue

Only qualified bidders who passed during the pre-qualification screening will be allowed to participate in the bidding. Bid proposals must be accompanied by Bid security equivalent to 1% of the bid bid price in an acceptable form.

The PBAC will not consider bid proposal submitted after the deadline. Late bid proposals will be returned unopened. The PBAC will conduct post evaluation of the lowest bid.

BATAAN PENINSULA STATE UNIVERSITY reserves the right to reject any or all bids without disclosing any reason, to waive any notice defects or informalities therein or to accept such bid as may be in the best interest of the University.

For further information please contact the following nos.: (047) 237-6509 loc. 107 / (047) 237-6509 / (047) 237-6509 loc. 107

(Sgd.) **DR. EUGENIO G. ESTRADA**
Chairman, BAC Secretariat

(Sgd.) **ROSA A. REYERA**
BAC Chairman

NOTICE TO THE PUBLIC

The public is advised that the Securities and Exchange Commission duly approved the change of corporate name of the following companies under the Negros Navigation ATS Group of Companies:

Previous Name	New Name
Atlantic Transport System (ATSC) Corporation	ATS Consolidated (ATSC), Inc.
Atlantic One, Inc.	ATS Express, Inc.
Atlantic One Distribution, Inc.	ATS Distribution, Inc.
Negros Navigation, Inc.	Negros ATS Logistics, Inc.
Atlantic Project 15, Corp.	Negros Mayon ATS Projects, Inc.

For your information and guidance.

(PRO - Sub. 23, 30 & 31, 2011)

LEGAL NOTICE
EXTRAJUDICIAL SETTLEMENT AMONG HEIRS

NOTICE is hereby given that the estate of the deceased SOLIVEN LOURDES SALDONADO - BUSTAMANTE and REYNERIO BUSTAMANTE, SR. who died intestate on December 20, 1991 and on October 15, 2011 respectively had been extrajudicially settled by and among the heirs-LUCILAS BUSTAMANTE, REYNERIO G. BUSTAMANTE, JR., JOSE S. BUSTAMANTE, NIMIA CARIDAD BUSTAMANTE-HOMERS, REYNERIO G. BUSTAMANTE III and ADOR M. LIMSON, NELLIE FAY S. LIMSON and CARMELA LERNIO S. LIMSON (collectively referred to as the HEIRS of the LATE CHERYL BUSTAMANTE-LIMSON) as per Doc. No. 181; Page No. 37; Book No. VI; Series of 2011 executed before Quezon City Notary Public Atty. Cecilio C. Lumiad Jr.

(PRO - December 16, 20, 2011 & Jan. 6, 2012)

CONDO UNITS FOR RENT

PARC CHATEAU, Ortigas - 2 BR furnished
MCKINLEY GARDEN VILLAS, Taguig - 2 BR furnished
ST. FRANCIS TOWERS, Mandaluyong - 2 BR furnished
CITY & LAND MEGA PLAZA, Ortigas - office space

For inquiries, Please call/Pamela at 256-2153 or 0922854.2648 during office hours

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LAND BANK OF THE PHILIPPINES

REQUEST FOR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST FOR CONSULTANCY SERVICES FOR THE FOLLOWING:

A. HIGHEST AND BEST USE STUDY OF LANDBANK CEBU PROPERTIES
B. ENTERPRISE RISK MANAGEMENT (ERM) PHASE 2

1. The Land Bank of The Philippines and its Consultancy Unit invites all qualified consultants to participate in the bidding for the following:

2. The Land Bank of The Philippines now seeks to be appointed as eligible consultants for Consultancy Services for the Highest and Best Use Study of LANDBANK Cebu Properties and Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) Phase 2.

3. A complete set of bidding documents may be purchased by interested consultants on

4. Interested consultants must have valid and current Mayor's/Business Permit and PhilGEPS Registration Number.

5. Bidders shall submit their proposals in accordance with the provisions of Republic Act 9184 and its Implementing Rules and Regulations. Bidders shall submit one (1) original and one (1) copy of their proposals.

6. Land Bank of the Philippines reserves the right to reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to accept the bid most advantageous to the Bank, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(PRO - December 23, 2011)

(SGD) ANA MARIA CONCEPCION
Head, Consultancy Unit

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PNOC EXPLORATION CORPORATION

INVITATION TO BID #49

PNOC Exploration Corporation (PNOC EC), through its duly and properly constituted BAC(s), invites bidders to apply for eligibility and to bid for the following project:

Project Name	Medical Services for In-House Examinees/Clients and Out-Patients for PNOC Exploration Corporation
Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC)	Two Million Seven Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php2,700,000.00), inclusive of all applicable taxes and other charges
Contract Duration	One (1) year
Source of Fund(s)	Office 1, Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City

Prospective bidders should have completed, within the last three (3) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project. Similarity will be understood to mean that the bidder has completed a contract/s involving the rendering of medical services as per requirements of the Terms of Reference (TOR). Bidders should comply with the requirements set forth in the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (RIRR) of Republic Act 9184 (RA 9184), otherwise known as the "Government Procurement Reform Act". Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, cooperatives and associations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to corporations, partnerships or associations duly organized under the laws of the Philippines of which at least sixty percent (60%) of the stock or participation in the board of directors or governing body belongs to citizens of the Philippines, pursuant to RA 5183 and as subject to Commonwealth Act 138, as applicable; duly licensed to engage in the business; and not blacklisted by the Philippine Government, the Philippine Contractors Accreditation Board or the Contract shall be governed by the pertinent provisions of the Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act 9184 (RA 9184).

The complete schedule of activities is stated, as follows:

Issuance of Eligibility Documents	December 19, 2011 to January 09, 2012
Submission of Eligibility Documents	January 09, 2012 (9:00 AM to 10:00 AM) at the Bids and Awards Committee Office, 1 Energy Center Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Examination and Opening of Bids (all bids shall be non-bi-opened)	January 9, 2012 (10:00 AM) at the Bids and Awards Committee Office, 1 Energy Center Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Bid Evaluation	Three working days
Post-qualification	Three working days
Notice of Award	Within 7 days

Interested parties may obtain further information from the Bids and Awards Committee Office at the above address and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Two Thousand Pesos (Php2,000.00). The Bidding Documents shall be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Procurement System (www.philgeps.gov.ph) and PNOC EC's website (www.pnoc.ec.com.ph), provided that bidders shall pay the non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the submission of their bids.

For further information, please contact:

PNOC EC Procurement Section
c/o Ms. Beverly C. Gonzaga or Ronilo M. Dino
Bids and Awards Committee Office
1 Energy Center, Merritt Road, Fort Bonifacio, Taguig City
Tel. No.: (632) 479-2000 or 840-1001 / Fax: (02) 840-1070
Email: bidsnawards@pnoc.ec.com.ph or secretariat@pnoc.ec.com.ph

PNOC EC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to accept the most advantageous bid to the Government, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders. PNOC EC assumes no responsibility whatsoever to compensate or indemnify bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of their bid.

(SGD) BEVERLY C. GONZAGA
Vice Chairperson
Bids and Awards Committee

(PRO - Dec. 23, 2011)

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Republic of the Philippines
NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY
Region V, Pan Bay, Legazpi City
Tel. No. (052) 480-7348/7349 loc 7310
Fax No. (052) 480-7360
Website: www.nfa.gov.ph

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF 500,000 BAG CAPACITY WAREHOUSE WITH OFFICE AND MISC. FACILITIES INCLUDING SITE DEVELOPMENT AT MAGALONG, BARAS, VIRRAGAN, CAMARINES SUR

The National Food Authority (NFA), Regional Office V through the General Appropriations Act, intends to apply the sum of P54,000,000.00 being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) in payments under the contract for the Construction of Warehouse with Office and Misc. Facilities including site development at Sitio Magalong, Barangay Baras, Libmanan, Camarines Sur. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall automatically be rejected without exception.

The NFA Regional Office V now invites bids for the Construction of 500,000 bags capacity warehouse including the construction of a Warehouse Supervisor's office, Shed and Electrical system at Sitio Magalong, Barangay Baras, Libmanan, Camarines Sur. Interested contractors with Lot Area of 1.50 hectares within a 180 calendar days.

A prospective bidder should possess a valid PCAB Contractor's License of at least Size Range "Medium B" and License Category "B" per PCAB Circular No. 007 dated 07 May 2009. Bidders should have completed, within five (5) years from the date of submission and receipt of bids, a contract similar to the Project with a value of at least fifty (50) of the ABC and meet the minimum responsibilities of an Eligible Contractor as enumerated in the Bidding Documents, particularly in Executive & Supervisory Competence.

Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using non-discretionary "pass/fail" criteria as specified in the Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184, otherwise known as the Government Procurement Reform Act.

A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders from NFA Regional Office V, Pan Bay, Legazpi City upon payment of the NFA Cashier of a non-refundable fee in the form of cash for the Bidding Documents in the amount of Five Hundred (P500.00).

A site visit to be conducted free of charge from the vicinity of the Malagong Communal Irrigation System (MCIS) Office, Baras, Libmanan, Camarines Sur (NFA), and NFA advises provided that bidders shall pay the non-refundable fee for the bidding documents and include that the submission of bid fee.

The schedule of the bids and bidding documents (BDs) activities is as follows:

	Bid Activities	Date and Time
1	Submission of Eligibility/Technical/Financial Bidding Documents	December 23, 2011 – January 10, 2012 (Monday to Tuesday/Office hours)
2	Pre-Bid Conference	January 4, 2012 at 10:00 AM
3	Receipt and Opening of Bids	January 10, 2012 at 10:00 AM

The NFA Regional Office V will hold a Pre-Bid Conference as per above schedule at the 2nd Floor Conference Room, NFA Regional Office Building, Pan Bay, Legazpi City.

Bids received after the 10:00 a.m. 2nd Floor Conference Room of the NFA Regional Office Building on the 10th, Legazpi City will not later than 10:00 a.m. of January 10, 2012 will also not be accepted for any cause beyond the control of the school as indicated in the bidding documents. Late bids shall not be accepted.

Bids will be opened in public of the duties' actions and activities above.

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY REGIONAL OFFICE V reserves the reasonable entitlement to postpone or indefinitely bidders for any expenses incurred in the preparation of the bid.

The NATIONAL FOOD AUTHORITY REGIONAL OFFICE V reserves the right to accept or reject any or all bids, to waive any defects or formalities found therein, to annul or cancel the bidding process at any time prior to contract award, impose additional terms and conditions and amend the proposal made advantageous to the Government without liability and thereby incurring any liability to the affected Bidders or Bidders whatsoever.

For further information inquiries, please refer to:

Name of Contact Person : MR. ALFREDO MERLINO CANLAHAN, JR.
Position/Address : BAC Chairman, Legazpi City
Telephone Nos. : (052) 480-7348 / (052) 820-2024 / (052) 480-7310
Fax No. : (052) 480-7360
Website address : www.nfa.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **RENATO V. BARRERA, MBA**
Regional Manager and Assistant Commissioner

Republic of the Philippines
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
REGION III
Matalino Pineda Legal Government Center,
Maimpis, City of San Fernando (P)
Tel. no. (045) 961-7823 • Telefax: (045) 961-1660
DepED Website – depedv.ph

DepED

December 19, 2011

INVITATION TO BID

To : ALL REGISTERED COOPERATIVES

The Department of Education Regional Office III, through its Bids and Awards Committee (BAC) invites Registered Cooperatives (cited by the Instructor project

Name of Project : Manufacturing, Supply and Installation Delivery of Furniture for Various Public Elementary Schools Under Furniture Assistance Program (FAP) Modernization

Brief Description : Elementary and Secondary Armchairs, Tables and Chairs and Teachers' Tables and Chairs

Source of Funds : Maintenance and Other Operating Expenses (MOOE)

LOT	LOCATION	CONTRACT DURATION	APPROVED BUDGET FOR THE CONTRACT (ABC) Php
1	Divisions of Nueva Ecija, Bulacan, Tarlac, Pampanga, Aurora, Zambales, Cabanatuan City, Science City of Muñoz, City of San Jose del Monte City and Mabalacat City	120 CD	3,440,611.67
2	Divisions of Pampanga, Bataan, Bulacan, Zambales, City of San Fernando, Angeles City, Tarlac City, Malolos City and Olongapo City	120 CD	3,571,328.00

Prospective bidders should be cooperatives within cluster that are currently registered with the Cooperative Development Authority (CDA) and have satisfactory in undertaking a similar project with an amount of at least 50% of the proposed contract for bidding and have key personnel and equipment required for the project as detailed in addition to the invitation of the project. The Eligibility Check / Screening as well as the preliminary examination of bids shall use non-discretionary pass / fail criteria. Post-qualification of the lowest calculated and shall be conducted.

All participants shall submit an Eligibility Statement and Screening, Bid Security, Performance Security, Bid-Bidding Conditions, Evaluation of bids, Post-qualification, Award of Contract shall be governed by the provisions of Republic Act 9184 and its Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (IRR).

The complete schedule of activities is listed as follows:

NO.	BAC ACTIVITIES	SCHEDULE	VENUE
1	Invite Applications for Eligibility/Screening Bid	December 19-27, 2011	Regional Office III
2	Issuance of Bid Documents	Dec. 19 - 2011 - Jan. 11, 2012	Office of the BAC Secretariat, 2nd Flr.
3	Pre-Bid Conference	January 5, 2012 10:00 AM	Regional Office III Conference Hall
4	Opening of Bids	January 11, 2012 - 10:00 AM	Regional Office III Conference Hall
5	Bid Evaluation/ Post Qualification	January 12-20, 2012	
6	Issuance of Notice of Award / Contract Signature	January 23-27, 2012	
7	Issuance of Notice to Proceed	January 30, 2012	

Bid Documents will be available only to prospective bidders upon payment of a non-refundable amount of Five Thousand Pesos (P5,000.00) to the DepED Region III Cashier.

The DepED BAC reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, and to annul the bidding process and reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

(Sgd.) **REDRIC Q. PASCUA, Ph.D.**
Chairman, Bids and Awards Committee
RBAC Chairman

INVITATION TO APPLY FOR ELIGIBILITY AND TO SUBMIT A PROPOSAL
Development of Wind Farm Facility in the Province of Camarines Sur Through a Joint Venture with the Provincial Government of Camarines Sur

The Provincial Government of Camarines Sur ("PGCS") intends to undertake a project for a joint venture with the PGCS for the development of a Wind Farm Facility in the Province of Camarines Sur under the framework of Provincial Ordinance No. 2008, Series of 2008, providing guidelines for the Province to enter into joint ventures with the private sector consistent with the 2008 National Economic Development Authority (NEDA) Joint Venture Guidelines.

The PGCS invites Commercial Private Sector Participants (CPP) to submit a comparative proposal with an investment commitment of 5 billion Pesos (Php 5,000,000,000).

For the purpose, the following criteria shall be strictly observed:

Issuance of Terms of Reference	December 16, 2011 – January 13, 2012
Pre-Bid/Bidder Conference	January 13, 2012
Submission and Opening of Eligibility Documents and Technical Proposals	February 13, 2012

Interested Private Sector Participants may obtain further information from the PGCS Joint Venture Selection Committee (JVSC) and inspect the Terms of Reference at the address given below during office hours from December 16, 2011 to January 13, 2012.

A complete set of the Terms of Reference may be purchased by prospective Private Sector Participants from the PGCS for P10,000.00 in the official Sales and Receipts payment of a non-refundable fee of Five Hundred Thousand Pesos (Php500,000.00) in the form of cash or manager's check.

Prospective Private Sector Participants must possess a track record and experience and capabilities in the wind site selection project feasibility, project engineering, turbine and wind farm construction, operation and maintenance of wind farm facilities and turbines. Foreign prospective Private Sector Participants should have the capability to finance the operation on the project.

Accomplished Eligibility Documents, Technical and Financial Proposals shall be submitted at the address given below.

PGCS reserves the right to reject, at any time prior to the signing of a Joint Venture Agreement, any or all proposals without thereby incurring any liability to the affected Private Sector Participants, waive any defect therein, and accept the offer it deems most advantageous to the government.

Address & Contact Information:

Provincial Government of Camarines Sur
Lt. Arts. Jesus Bldg. Peñafrancia Avenue
Naga City
Office of the Provincial Legal Officer
2nd Flr. Main Bldg., Capitol Complex, Calabanga, Camarines Sur
Tel. No. (054) 881-6778 Fax No. (054) 881-6778

(Sgd.) **FORTUNATO C. DELA PEÑA**
Chairman, PGCS Joint Venture Selection Committee

NOTICE OF APPLICATION FOR WITHDRAWAL OF LICENSE OF KELLOGG ASIA MARKETING, INC.'S BRANCH OFFICE

Notice is hereby given that on April 26, 2011, the Board of Directors of Kellogg Asia Marketing, Inc. ("KAM Inc.") resolved to apply for the withdrawal of the license of its branch office in the Philippines. The said application will be filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission.

All persons having just claims against KAM Inc.'s branch office are requested to submit the same to Atty. Armando Cledera at 14th Net Cube Center, 3rd Avenue corner 30th Street, E-Square Zone, Bonifacio Global City, Taguig City.

This announcement will serve as notice to all parties concerned of the abovementioned application for the withdrawal of the license of KAMI Inc.'s branch office.

(Sgd.) **Armando Cledera**
Assistant Agent

Stellar opens new facility

STELLAR PHILIPPINES, ONE of the country's fastest-rising and progressive business process outsourcing (BPO) companies, opened its newest facility located in Quezon City.

The formal opening of the new Stellar Philippines facility at the 20th Floor, MOC 100 Building, E. Rodriguez Ave., Bagumbayan, Libis, Quezon City, one of the newest and most modern buildings in the area, is part of the company's commitment to expand further its presence in the country and who serves as a strategic investment to its successful operations for the past several years.

According to Mr. Edmund Mariano, Chief Executive Officer of Stellar Philippines, the decision to open its newest facility in one of the country's most sought BPO area, was very significant since the location boasts of state-of-the-art power and telecommunications facilities, the two most important factors BPO locators look for to ensure seamless operations.

"With this new location, we are convinced that we would be able to attract even more qualified talents who are willing to be part of this burgeoning industry," declared Mr. Mariano.

For next year, Mr. Mariano hayed they plan to hire an additional 1,000 agents as part of their expansion efforts.

Aside from power and telecommunications, the new facility in Libis is also at the center of an area that provides all amenities and necessities of life like food, recreation, nature, leisure, entertainment, and other

exciting features to provide the facility an even more conducive work environment.

"We value our people's work that is why we made sure that with this new facility, the quality of work by our agents, their level of expertise and of course, the overall work culture of fun and excitement, remain intact."

The opening of the new third Philippines facility saw the company's top executives and management personnel in full attendance, and was cited many times throughout the program the presence of its special guest, Undersecretary Cristino Panlilio of the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and other government and BPO industry officials and executives.

DEPARTMENT OF LABOR AND EMPLOYMENT
Regional Office No. 05
[illegible]

NOTICE OF FILING OF APPLICATION FOR FILIPINO EMPLOYMENT PERMIT (EP)

Name and Address of Employer/Principal	Name and Address of Applicant	Position and Brief Description of Job
1. [illegible]	[illegible]	Project Engineer P 15,000

[illegible]

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INVITATION TO BID FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF ONE (1) LOT DATA STORAGE FOR PRODUCTION DATABASES, EMAIL AND DOCUMENT FILES (ITB NO. DSD) (2011-12-017)

1. The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, through the Corporate Operating Budget (COB) for 2011 intends to apply the sum of **One Million Four Hundred Eighty Five Thousand Six Hundred Eighty Eight Pesos (PhP 1,485,688.00)** being the Approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Bidding for the Procurement of One (1) Lot Data Storage for Production Databases, Email and Document Files (ITB No. DSD (2011-12-017))**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

2. The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation now invites bids on the **Bidding for the Procurement of One (1) Lot Data Storage for Production Databases, Email and Document Files.** Delivery of the Goods is required within thirty (30) calendar days after the issuance of the Notice to Proceed. Bidders should have completed within January 01, 2009 to December 31, 2011, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, particularly, in Section II. Instructions to Bidders.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the **Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (RIRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184**, otherwise known as the **"Government Procurement Reform Act"**.

Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to RA 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138.

4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the PHILHEALTH Bids and Awards Committee for Information Technology Resources Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during office hours from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders on **January 09-20, 2012 (8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)** from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of **Five Thousand Pesos only (PhP 5,000.00)**. It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) and the website of the Procuring Entity on **January 13-20, 2012** provided that Bidders shall pay the non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the day before the submission of their bids.

6. The BAC-ITR will hold a Pre-Bid Conference on **January 20, 2012, 11:00 a.m.** at BSAC Conference Area (Room 1002), Philhealth Head Office, 16th Floor Citystate Center, 709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City which shall be open only to all interested parties who have purchased the Bidding Documents.

7. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **February 01, 2012, 11:00 a.m.** All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in Instruction to Bidders **(ITB)** Clause 15.

Bid opening shall be on **February 01, 2012, 11:00 a.m.** at the BSAC Conference Area (Rm. 1002), Philhealth Head Office, 16th Flr., Citystate Center, 709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

8. The bidder shall drop three (3) sealed envelopes in the bid box as specified in the Instruction to Bidder Clause 22 and Bid Data Sheet for Bidding and Markings of the envelopes.

9. PHILHEALTH reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

10. For further information, please refer to:

ATTY. MA. EMILY P. ROQUE
Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committee
Philhealth Head Office, Room 1002, 16th Floor, Citystate Center,
709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City
Telephone: 637-0700
www.philhealth.gov.ph
www.philhealth.gov.ph

(Sgd.) **ERNESTO V. BELTRAN**
BAC Member
Chairperson, BAC-ITR

(BSC, December 23, 2011)

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF THE(2) UNIT(S) LASER JET NETWORK PRINTER (ITB NO. LNP (2011-12-017))

1. The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, through the Corporate Operating Budget (COB) for 2011 intends to apply the sum of **Eight Hundred Fifty Six Thousand Five Hundred Twenty One Pesos and Sixty Centavos (PhP 856,521.60)** being the approved Budget for the Contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Bidding for the Procurement of Twelve (12) units Laserjet Network Printer (ITB No. LNP (2011-12-017))**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

2. The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation now invites bids on the **Bidding for the Procurement of twelve (12) units Laserjet Network Printer.** Delivery of the Goods is required within thirty (30) calendar days after the issuance of the Notice to Proceed. Bidders should have completed within January 01, 2009 to December 31, 2011, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, particularly, in Section II. Instructions to Bidders.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the **Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (RIRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184**, otherwise known as the **"Government Procurement Reform Act"**.

Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to RA 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138.

4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the PHILHEALTH Bids and Awards Committee for Information Technology Resources Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during office hours from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders on **January 11-27, 2012 (8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)** from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of **One Thousand Pesos only (PhP 1,000.00)**. It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) and the website of the Procuring Entity on **January 11-27, 2012** provided that Bidders shall pay the non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the day before the submission of their bids.

6. The BAC-ITR will hold a Pre-Bid Conference on **January 20, 2012, 11:00 a.m.** at BSAC Conference Area (Room 1002), Philhealth Head Office, 16th Floor Citystate Center, 709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City which shall be open only to all interested parties who have purchased the Bidding Documents.

7. Bids must be delivered to the address below on or before **January 30, 2012, 11:00 a.m.** All Bids must be accompanied by a bid security in any of the acceptable forms and in the amount stated in Instruction to Bidders **(ITB)** Clause 15.

Bid opening shall be on **January 30, 2012, 11:00 a.m.** at the BSAC Conference Area (Rm. 1002), Philhealth Head Office, 16th Flr., Citystate Center, 709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City. Bids will be opened in the presence of the Bidders' representatives who choose to attend at the address below. **Late bids shall not be accepted.**

8. The bidder shall drop three (3) sealed envelopes in the bid box as specified in the Instruction to Bidder Clause 22 and Bid Data Sheet for Bidding and Markings of the envelopes.

9. PHILHEALTH reserves the right to accept or reject any bid, to annul the bidding process, and to reject all bids at any time prior to contract award, without thereby incurring any liability to the affected bidder or bidders.

10. For further information, please refer to:

ATTY. MA. EMILY P. ROQUE
Secretariat for the Bids and Awards Committee
Philhealth Head Office, Room 1002, 16th Floor, Citystate Center,
709 Shaw Blvd., Brgy. Oranbo, Pasig City
Telephone: 637-0700
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(Sgd.) **ERNESTO V. BELTRAN**
BAC Member
Chairperson, BAC-ITR

(BSC, December 23, 2011)

INVITATION TO BID FOR THE PROCUREMENT OF ONE (1) LOT NETWORK SECURITY DEVICES FOR PHIC06 AND SIDS (ITB NO. NSD (2011-12-018))

1. The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation, through the Corporate Operating Budget (COB) for 2011 intends to apply the sum of **Four Million Nine Hundred Thousand Eighty Four Pesos and Forty Five Centavos (PhP 4,900,084.45)** being the approved budget for the contract (ABC) to payments under the contract for the **Bidding for the Procurement of One (1) Lot Network Security Devices for PHIC06 and SIDs (ITB No. NSD (2011-12-018))**. Bids received in excess of the ABC shall be automatically rejected at bid opening.

2. The Philippine Health Insurance Corporation now invites bids on the **Bidding for the Procurement of One (1) Lot Network Security Devices for PHIC06 and SIDs.** Delivery of the Goods is required within thirty (30) calendar days after the issuance of the Notice to Proceed. Bidders should have completed within January 01, 2009 to December 31, 2011, a contract similar to the Project. The description of an eligible bidder is contained in the Bidding Documents, particularly, in Section II. Instructions to Bidders.

3. Bidding will be conducted through open competitive bidding procedures using a non-discretionary "pass/fail" criterion as specified in the **Revised Implementing Rules and Regulations (RIRR) of Republic Act (RA) 9184**, otherwise known as the **"Government Procurement Reform Act"**.

Bidding is restricted to Filipino citizens/sole proprietorships, partnerships, or organizations with at least sixty percent (60%) interest or outstanding capital stock belonging to citizens of the Philippines, and to citizens or organizations of a country the laws or regulations of which grant similar rights or privileges to Filipino citizens, pursuant to RA 5183 and subject to Commonwealth Act 138.

4. Interested bidders may obtain further information from the PHILHEALTH Bids and Awards Committee for Information Technology Resources Secretariat and inspect the Bidding Documents at the address given below during office hours from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

5. A complete set of Bidding Documents may be purchased by interested Bidders on **January 11-27, 2012 (8:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.)** from the address below and upon payment of a non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents in the amount of **One Thousand Pesos only (PhP 1,000.00)**. It may also be downloaded free of charge from the website of the Philippine Government Electronic Procurement System (PhilGEPS) and the website of the Procuring Entity on **January 11-27, 2012** provided that Bidders shall pay the non-refundable fee for the Bidding Documents not later than the day before the submission of their bids.

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(BSC, December 23, 2011)

OBITUARIES

"Now I am about to go the way of all the earth, You know with all your heart and soul that not one of all the good promises the LORD your God gave you has failed. Every promise has been fulfilled; not one has failed."
– Joshua 23:14

All the pain and grief is over.
Tears and sorrow among passed.
Calm now surpasses history.
Light chases in Heaven at last.

NENA LIZ PAMUCHALMAN-MAGNAYE
Davao City
13 July 1932 – 11 December 2011

has peacefully joined her husband Adelaido, after receiving the Last Sacrament. He, Michael Heidi, Peter & Jenni, Grace & Andrew, grandchildren Carla Bianca, Miguel, Christopher, Sam and Alex and great-grandchildren Ielka and Mia are thankful for all the prayers and support extended to them.

A Memorial Celebration in her honor will be held on 17 December, 2011 from 12:00 noon to 11:00 midnight at the St. Maria de la Strada Church, Kamputan Avenue corner Pascal Street, Quezon City. Requiem Mass at 7:00 p.m.

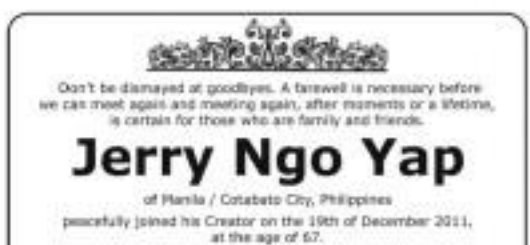
Family, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of her soul. In lieu of flowers, donations in her favored foundation will be appreciated.

An obituary with a picture can be a fitting tribute to your departed loved one.

Always caring...
INQUIRER OBITUARIES

OBITUARY REQUIREMENTS
- Copy of Death Certificate
- Any identification document (ID)

DEATH ANNOUNCEMENT • NOTICES OF THANKS • DEATH ANNIVERSARY • REQUIEMS • FREE WEB DESIGN



Don't be dismayed at goodbyes. A farewell is necessary before we can meet again and meeting again, after moments or a lifetime, is certain for those who are family and friends.

Jerry Ngo Yap

of Manila / Cotabato City, Philippines

peacefully joined his Creator on the 19th of December 2011, at the age of 67.

He is survived by his wife Ida Yap, Children: Eugene - Diane; Jennifer - Earl; and Gilbert. Grandchildren: Aleisha, Cameron, Megan

His body lies in state at Sanctuarium, Araneta Avenue, Quezon City from December 19 to December 25, 2011.
Cremation is on December 26, 1:00pm at Sanctuarium and Interment will be on December 31, 2011, 9:00am at Heritage Park, Taguig City.

The family, relatives and friends request the pious readers to pray for the eternal repose of his soul.

"Eternal rest grant unto him, O Lord.
And let perpetual light shine upon him. May he rest in peace. Amen."

Our Dearly Beloved
Elvira David Angeles
Peacefully joined the Lord in Heaven on 18 2011 at the age of 88

For Arlene Bailey & Eileen Bailey & Sherwin, Jon & Anne Mayer, Tess & Allan, Warren & Edelia, Mary Ann & Ray, her brothers and sisters, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren ask for our prayers for the repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at Our Lady of Fatima Chapel, Cubao, Quezon City.

Interment will be on Tuesday, December 27, 2011 at the Chapel of Lupa Memorial in San Mateo, Cubao, Quezon after the 11:00 a.m. funeral mass at San Mateo Parish Church.

Corazon Barrameda Vicente vda Pagkalinawan
(June 26, 1931 – December 16, 2011)

Peacefully joined our Lord
on December 16, 2011 at the age of 80

For children Ruby & Eileen, Bobby & Sherrie, Jun & Anne, Mayet, Tess & Allan, Warren & Edelia, Mary Ann & Ray, her brothers and sisters, her grandchildren and great-grandchildren ask for our prayers for the repose of her soul.

Her remains lie in state at San Marcos, Calumpit, Bulacan.

Interment will be on Tuesday, December 27, 2011 at the Chapel of Lupa Memorial in San Marcos, Calumpit, Bulacan after the 11:00 a.m. funeral mass at San Marcos Parish Church.

People, Events & Products

E-mail: supplements@inquirer.com.ph
Supplements Head: Jong Rosario

FDA approves saxagliptin as combination therapy with insulin

By Joel Rigos

With the many sumptuous feasts and gastronomic temptations it brings, the Christmas season is often a dilemma for patients with diabetes trying to keep their blood sugar level in check. Fortunately, Christmas this year also brings good tidings: AstraZeneca's oral anti-diabetic drug, saxagliptin, has been approved by the Philippine Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for use as a combination therapy with insulin (with or without metformin) to improve blood sugar control in adult patients with type 2 diabetes.

The Philippine FDA approval was based on new Phase 3b data, which showed that saxagliptin 5 mg added to insulin (with or without metformin) significantly reduced blood sugar levels at 24 weeks and maintained those reductions over 52 weeks. This latest approval broadens the therapeutic indications of saxagliptin.

In monotherapy, saxagliptin is indicated as an adjunct to diet and exercise to improve glycemic control in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus. It is indicated for use as initial combination therapy with metformin, as an adjunct to diet and exercise, to improve glycemic control in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus when dual saxagliptin and metformin therapy is appropriate. As add-on combination, saxagliptin is indicated in patients with type 2 diabetes mellitus to improve glycemic control in combination with metformin, a thiazolidinedione, a sulfonylurea, or insulin (with or without metformin) when the simple agent alone, with diet and exercise, does not provide adequate glycemic control.

"The new data on saxagliptin in combination with insulin and the only-approved regulatory approval in combination with metformin now further document and reinforce Bristol-Myers Squibb's strong pharmaceutical pipeline in diabetes," said Dr. Elaine L. Yee, medical director, AstraZeneca Philippines.

Novel mode of action

Launched in the Philippines in July 2010, saxagliptin belongs to a novel class of oral anti-diabetes drugs called DPP-4 inhibitors. DPP-4 is an enzyme that negatively affects blood sugar control by inactivating natural hormones in the body called incretin. Incretins decrease elevated blood sugar (glucose) by increasing the body's utilization of sugar, mainly by increasing insulin production in the pancreas and reducing the liver's production of glucose.

Clinical studies show that saxagliptin, either as monotherapy or combined with other commonly used oral anti-diabetes drugs, consistently produced clinically relevant and statistically significant reductions in all three key measures of glucose control known as the "glucose triad": HbA1c, fasting plasma glucose and post-prandial glucose.

Sustained efficacy in diabetic patients with renal impairment

Results of a new randomized clinical trial show that saxagliptin provides sustained efficacy (reduction in HbA1c) and good tolerability for patients with type 2 diabetes and moderate or severe renal impairment. The presence of renal impairment, whether it occurs as an independent condition in diabetic patients or as a complication of the disease, makes diabetes management more complex and difficult. The study's findings suggest that saxagliptin can address an unmet need in patients with type 2 diabetes who moderate or severe renal impairment.

AstraZeneca executives, from left: Benito Ebrie, Diabetes Plus specialist; Azad Bobbio, president; Lotis Reyes, group brand manager for Diabetes Care; type-2 diabetic patient Johnny and his doctor, Dr. Dennis Uy, medical director; and Dr. Lennan Arca, medical affairs manager

Grow Milk assures moms of optimal nutrients absorption

TRUTH: nutritious, value for money are traits that can hardly be bundled into one food product with the threats on nutritious, safe food resources and other debility nowadays.

Abbott Philippines is pleased and excited to share that these three can be found in Grow Milk, providing not only sweet delicious milk for kids but assures means of optimal nutritional absorption.

At a recent press event, Abbott revealed its newest brand ambassador, Gladys Reyes, who plays her most challenging honorable role when it comes to the welfare of her kids.

"Iisa pa rin ako sa mga nasa list. Hindi pawawalang 'pawerde na'," she says in her new Grow TV ad which consistently translates on how she is in real life—very particular in giving her kids only the best she personally believes in.

A blind taste test was conducted by global research company IPSOS on 150 participants' ends among mom and kids. Participants were given a sample of Grow and another formula milk brand. Actual attributes like smell, creaminess, flavor, texture, right sweetness and non-aftertaste—GROW has been consistently favored by mom and kids alike. (Reference: Randomized Blind Taste Test across 150 kids and moms - May 2011)

Grow supports optimal absorption of calcium and does not contain palm oil. Studies have shown that presence of palm oil in a child's diet specifically on milk powder is significant by lower bone mineral density. (Source: Reduced Bone Mineralization in Infants Fed Palm Olein-Containing Formula: A Randomized, Double-Blinded, Prospective Trial - Nov 2001)

The importance of early nutrition programming are huge—differences in risk factors for cardiovascular disease, diabetes and obesity, in immune function and allergy risk, in bone health, and in cognitive, neuro-motor and behavioral outcomes have all been seen in children. The potential for improving the health of future generations is enormous.

PTAA GEARS UP FOR 19TH TRAVEL TOUR EXPO 2013

The Philippine Travel Agencies Association (PTAA) gears up for the biggest travel and tourism industry event of the year. The 19th Travel Tour Expo (TTE) 2013 is scheduled on Feb. 17 to 19 at the SMX Convention Center Halls 1, 2, 3 and 4 in Pasay City. Inspired by the resounding success of last year's edition that hosted of more than 60,000 visitors and over 450 booths featuring 200 firms to boot, the 19th Travel Tour Expo 2013 organizing committee headed by PTAA president and TTE co-chairperson Abner Clemente and TTE 2013 chairman John Paul Canaya (third and fourth from left) together with the convention chairmen (from left) Jaime Yang for media, Phaeton Javier for program, Maricris Cuesa for visa; Lulu Velasco for finance. As thanking its for sponsoring, sergeant at arms Punch Jaca for security, and adviser and previous officer Mariviana Regpala, promise visitors an even wider variety of travel options and special packages only available onsite during the three-day event dates. The 19th Travel Tour Expo 2013 is organized by PTAA with the Department of Tourism. This event is also supported by Philippine Airlines as official carrier.

Avon beauties share beauty secrets in Avon catalogue

HOLIDAY shopping with Avon begins with the catalogue. And this Christmas season, customers and representatives can browse through premium goodies in the debonair issue of Avon's newest endorser Hilario Bianco and 2011 Ms. Philippines-Universe Shamcey Supsup. In the brochures and a special flyer, these two beauties share their Avon favorites and holiday must-haves.

Aside from gracing the pages of the brochures, Hilario has lent her alluring beauty, boldness and passion to the new Avon fragrance, Little Red Dress. This sensual fruity scent is for the women who dares to steal the show and turn heads in the same way that a gorgeous red frock demands attention in a sea of black and white. This gift of bottled passion is perfect for any gal who likes to make a statement. Make sure you don't miss out on this!

An array of other giftable items fill the pages of Avon's November and December brochures, including its iconic fashion jewelry department Fashion Holiday Collection Best, designer jewelry, premium bags, quality beauty products, and home and décor items that make for wonderful presents.

Avon also unveils a different deal every day, as part of the Avon's recent 50 Days 50 Deals of November, and an equally exciting series of promotions this December, such as Avon Countdown to Christmas.

A first for Avon, these promos feature the brand's highest quality and best-selling beauty, fashion and home products. And, these products are made available at incredibly discounted prices, for instance, on specified dates, one can purchase two sets of intimate apparel and get the third for free. On another day, customers can get select items at up to 70 percent off.

Aside from these amazing promos and amazing prices in each bi-monthly campaign, one of Avon's best gifts to women all over the Philippines is a source of livelihood—a chance to gain financial freedom by selling Avon. This Christmas season, Avon reminds us to provide its representatives with unparalleled earning opportunities and incentives programs, so that their Avon businesses and careers can continue to grow and flourish.

Share the Christmas spirit with the people you love. Call your Avon lady now and inquire about today's fabulous deals. Log on to www.avon.com.ph to find out how to connect an Avon representative.

Bits & Clips

Nexcare and Future share first aid and injury prevention tips

Nexcare provider of heavy-duty bandages and cast Futuretfi, the health supports and hosiery brand from 3M launched an awareness campaign about first aid and injury prevention at the recently held Run United 5.0 at the Mall of Asia grounds which was attended by over 15,000 runners. 3M Philippines set up a booth where runners can receive about right first aid applications and specialized tapes and bandages. Nexcare by 3M has a wide range of first aid products that provide superior protection for wounded skin. Young hearty bodies will love the waterproof and colorful bandages that are so much fun to wear but work seriously to aid healing. Nexcare heavy duty bandages that come in Tattoo designs, bright colors, Disney characters or camouflage provide protection against water, germs and dirt. The bandages' breathable material allows the skin to breath and are available in various shapes, sizes and designs that kids of all ages will love. Above, the 3M team at the Run for Healthy Trilogy Leg 2.

Pinoy rock icons in Music Museum gig

Screamfest will be shaking up its foundations as Pinoy rock legends take the roof of Music Museum on Jan. 26, 2013. The gig is entitled "Rockin' The Roots At Music Museum." This is the initial offering of DREAMERS, Inc., and features the best of Pinoy Rock. Rockin' the joint are Joey "Pepe" Smith, Rene Garcia of Wolfgang, Lolito Cachuela of Rizal, Mutya Lorbes kasi many lovely fabulous, lead guitarist Gary Perez, bass man "Eggee" De Castro, and the "Rain-Man" Ramon "RJ" Jadeno. Tickets are available at Music Museum Ticketron and Ticketworld or call 891-0000.

PictureBooks offers 2 plus 1 Christmas Promo

PictureBooks, the pioneer in quality and affordable do-it-yourself photo books is in the country is announcing the best way to memorialize and share your holiday memories. For this Christmas offering a 2+1 promo. Making a book is easy: just download the free and easy-to-use software from their website (www.picturebooks.com.ph) and make the book in the comfort of your own home. The software even contains a wizard that will help you through the process step by step. Once done making the book, you can easily upload it and pay online, and the books will be delivered in 7 days. Delivery is free within the Philippines. Promo is until Dec. 31, 2012.

Cherry Foodarama celebrates 59th anniversary with low prices all year

Pioneering Philippine retail firm Cherry Foodarama celebrates 2012 via its 59th year founding anniversary by honoring all Filipinos consumers with low prices the whole year round. It's Department of Trade & Industry (DTI)-approved Jan. 22, 2012 grand store at Cherry Foodarama Antipolo City branch will give each branch customer of Montalvan St., Antipolo City and Ortigas Provincial Avenue, Cainta City) a brand new Toyota Avanza (7-seater model).

UST Psych alumni homecoming on Mar. 3 to launch scholarship foundation

The University of Santo Tomas Association of Thomasian Psychology Alumni (UST ATPA) will host its first grand alumni homecoming dubbed as "Psyched: The Beginning" to launch the scholarship foundation and commemorate the birth of Fr. Angel De Blas, who introduced Psychology in UST. The said event will take place on Mar. 3, 2012, 6 p.m., at Metro Concert Bar, West Avenue, Quezon City. For more information and ticket reservations, one may call us at 436-1611 loc 8233, (0917) 817-4082, or e-mail us at ustpsychalumni@gmail.com. For updates, Like Facebook fan page: #PSYCHED'TO'BEGIN@ING and follow Twitter: @psyched. This is your chance to relive your college days and reconnect with old friends.

DISTRIBUTION AND SUPPLY AGREEMENT

Entegreen, a company based in Malaysia assists in the business of developing innovative biotechnology products for vector control, recently entered into a distribution and supply agreement with Neem Philippines, Inc. and Yngestreh, Inc. for the distribution of a target-specific, non-toxic, environmental friendly preparation that kills mosquito larvae for the prevention of mosquito-borne diseases such as dengue and malaria. Shown are Ronald Allan Cruz, President of Neem Philippines; Mr. Eugenio S. Ynion, Jr., President of Yngestreh, Inc. and Mr. Santiago Francis, Director of Marketing, Entegreen Industries, Standing, Dr. Alan E. Brandt, Founder and Director of Technology and Innovation, Entegreen Industries and Mr. Heskel Jaafar, General Manager, Entegreen Industries. Neem Philippines, Inc. is the local partner. Yngestreh, Inc. is the exclusive distributor for wholesale and retail.